



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

RYFANCY

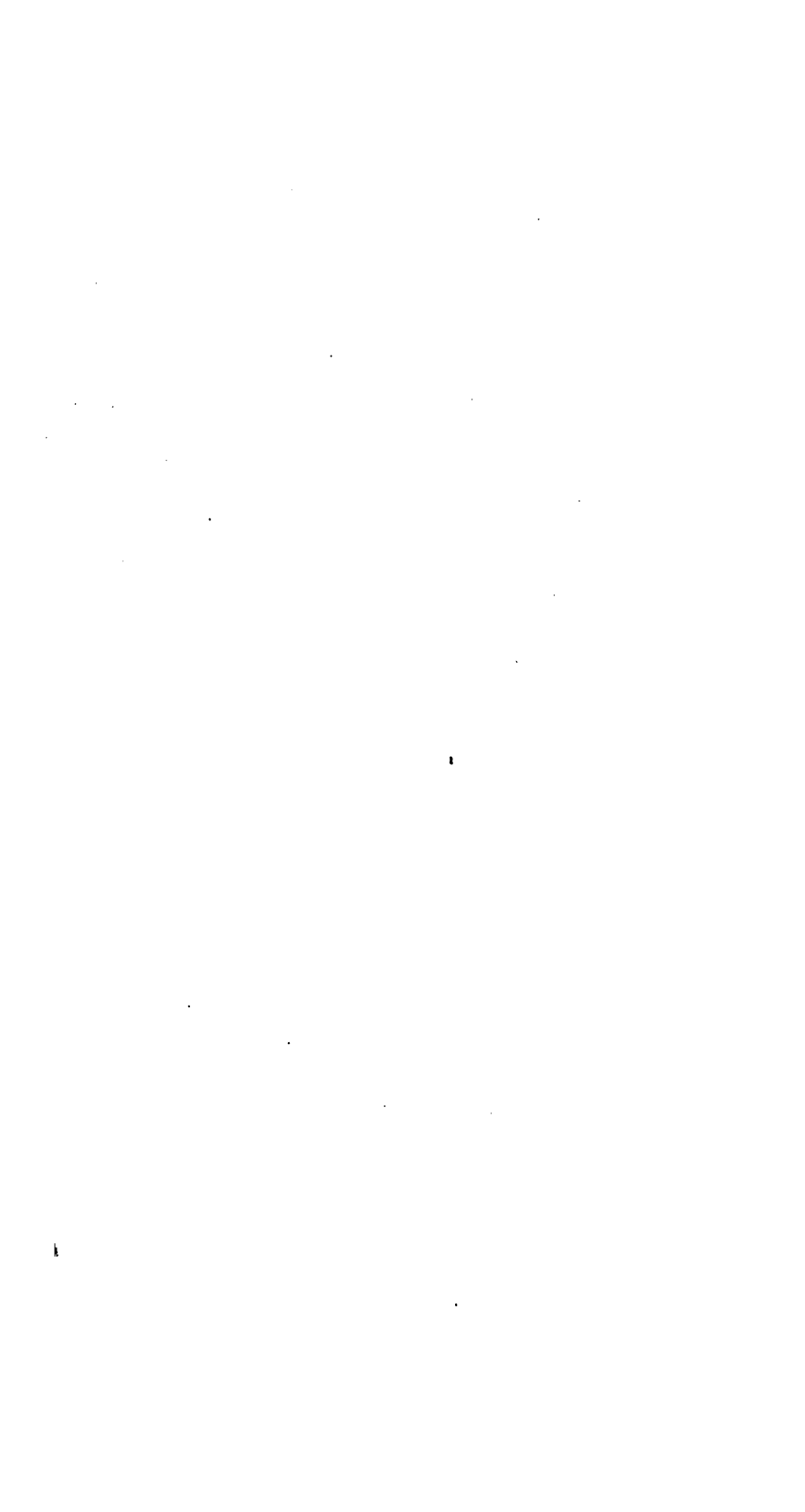


W. C. BRAD



600073894.





# FAIRY FANCY.











"COME ALONG WITH ME, SHE SAID."

# FAIRY FANCY:

WHAT SHE SAW AND WHAT SHE HEARD.

BY

MRS. C. A. READ,

AUTHOR OF "MILLY DAVIDSON," "SILVERMERE," "OUR DOLLY,"  
ETC. ETC.

*ILLUSTRATED.*



LONDON:  
BLACKIE & SON, 49 OLD BAILEY, E.C.;  
GLASGOW, EDINBURGH, AND DUBLIN.  
1883.

251 g. 503



## CONTENTS

---

### PART I.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. TOPH, . . . . .	7
II. TIBBY'S IDLE CURIOSITY, . . . . .	20
III. A DANGEROUS ADVENTURE, . . . . .	30
IV. POOR ROBIN, . . . . .	47
V. GONE AWAY, . . . . .	66

### PART II.

VI. AFTER THREE YEARS' BANISHMENT, . . . .	77
VII. HOW MISS JANE DEALS WITH HARRY, . . .	101
VIII. HOW ELLA RAN AWAY, . . . . .	122
IX. HOW ELLA'S RUNAWAY ENDED, . . . . .	140
X. A GIPSY AT MOUNTAIN HOUSE, . . . . .	159
XI. CONCLUSION OF THE FAIRY'S STORY, . . .	185





# FAIRY FANCY:

WHAT SHE SAW AND WHAT SHE HEARD.

## PART I.

---

### CHAPTER I.

TOPH.

**I**T is quite common for men and women to write about their travels and experiences for the benefit and amusement of others. Indeed the fashion is set by the great ones of the earth, kings and queens and princes, so that it is not surprising if I, a descendant in direct line from the illustrious Titania, queen of the fairies, should make known my experiences during my last visit to the habitation of mortals, more particularly as it is scarcely probable any of our race in future will care to visit a world becoming so matter of fact and sensible—so realistic as they call it.

Of course all well-read little girls and boys know that when people crowded into the world, we fairies crowded out of it by degrees. What you call science almost entirely wiped us out; in fact we should be all clean gone but for the faith of a few poetically minded persons and young children. There is a law among us which compels us to remain on earth so long as a single person believes in us, and we exist in proportion to the number of believers.

The family to which I belonged had retired inside one of your wild Scotch mountains, because a poet and his family lived near its foot.

I, for one, was not contented, and often wished to see the world, for I had only visited mortals about half-a-dozen times since the flood. My mother at length consented that I should have my wish gratified in due time, and that night, when we came out to hold our revels, I felt tired, and curled myself up to sleep in a broom blossom.

Once I used to know a mortal who wrote a meditation upon a broomstick—and upon a broomstick depended my future, as you shall hear. I suppose I slept, for I knew no more after lying down inside the blossom till I found a pair of human eyes fixed upon me as I lay. I

ought to mention that to rouse me into life among mortals some one must recognize me. But, dear me, I was no longer on the side of our Scotch mountain, but on the top of a broomstick, and



the pair of eyes belonged to a half-naked little baby. Somethings else saw me as well as the baby, but without understanding me in the least, a robin-redbreast, a butterfly, and a wooden doll lying on the floor. The sunlight almost blinded



me at first, but I soon got used to it, and presently I took courage and crept out from the blossom and down the broomstick, so that just when a cross nurse came and picked up the baby I had managed to hide quite comfortably inside his breast. I ought to tell you that my name is Phantastikos—a long name, you will say, but our family used to live in Greece ages ago, so that my name is a Grecian one, but you can call me “Fancy”—“the Fairy Fancy.”

Nurse carried the baby into a pretty room, and closing the door she shook him and slapped him, at the same time calling him naughty, for crawling out of the nursery just when she had left him for a moment. I whispered in his ear a pretty poem about fairy bells, birds and bees, and mountain blossoms, so that he scarcely heard the cross nurse at all, and forgot to cry for her punishment. Then she dressed him quickly and brought him his breakfast, and I could see that she tried to make up for her temper by being extra kind to him. I soon found that I had not got so far away from my mountain home after all, for it was in the poet's house I had taken up my abode, and by degrees I got to know every member of the family, and, after a while, the visitors too

There was a cat called Tibby, and a dog named Tray, inside the house. There were hens and cocks outside, and a fox used to visit them. At first I thought he might be a friend of Tray's, but I soon learned the difference. There was another visitor of whom the master of the house was very fond, and that was a raven; and my baby Ernest liked him too, and used to try and talk with him; but every one else hated him, because they said he was a thief, and got them into trouble. Master called him Mephistopheles, but no one else cared to pronounce the long name, so they usually called him "Toph the Thief," and he knew his name well, and had learned lots of words from the family, so that the servants thought he was an evil spirit, and they were quite right too, for doing mischief was his greatest delight. He liked the master's notice, and hated everything else he paid any attention to.

One day Nurse took a pitcher to fetch some water from the lake below the house. Ernest cried to go with her, but she said she couldn't carry him and the pitcher too. I followed her and whispered in her ear that she ought to fetch the baby, and that he could toddle a little way, so she needn't carry him. Ellen wasn't an ill-

natured girl, so she put down the pitcher beside a bunch of tall grass, and ran back to the house. She had only turned away when who should swoop down but Toph. There was a twinkle in his eye, such as I knew boded mischief; then he



looked into the pitcher, and I knew he felt sorry that there was not something in it either good to eat or to destroy. Next moment he tumbled it over with his strong beak against a stone, and smashed it in two pieces, then he croaked twice, his method of laughing, and flew away into a grove of trees at a little distance to watch the result. Presently Tray came racing along, and I

knew Nurse and Ernest could not be far behind. He stopped when he came to the jar, smelt all round it and looked puzzled, then he gave a short sharp bark. I had noticed Tibby, the cat, at the other side of the clump of grass sitting watching for a field-mouse to come out of its hole, but when she heard Tray bark she thought she had better come and see what he meant.

I have noticed that cats are very like little girls in being curious about what doesn't concern them, and they frequently get into trouble over their curiosity, as poor Tibby did.



She had just emerged from the underwood as Nurse came up with Ernest in her arms. She mewed loudly, and in her language said:

“Naughty Tray, you’ve been and broken the pitcher.”

“Bow wow!” cried Tray angrily, which meant: “I didn’t, you did it yourself.”

“O dear, what shall I do!” cried Ellen; then catching sight of poor Tibby she exclaimed, “I’ll

pay you, Miss Pussy. You broke it as you did the jug the other day."

"She did break it," chimed in Tray with his bow wow.

Then to Ellen's surprise Tibby flew at Tray and scratched his face; and Tray defended himself and then attacked the cat. Pussy turned and ran away, Tray following her at full speed



till she reached the very tree where Toph sat laughing till he shook all his feathers.

When Tibby got to the top she began to complain of the unjust treatment she had received from her friend Tray. He told her that he knew Tray broke the pitcher. She was quite right in that, and he encouraged her in her bad feeling to her former companion, on the principle that when friends fall out the common enemy is sure to find their weak points.

So Ellen carried Ernest home again, and had a good scolding from the cook for her carelessness,

and the baby tried to tell her that Nurse did not break the pitcher, but he couldn't put what he wanted to say in words.

Meantime Tibby kept up in the tree all day, and although she was dreadfully hungry she never attempted to come down till it was quite dark, and she knew that Nurse would be gone to bed, and Tray asleep on the rug in the hall. All this time Toph kept her company, and heard her tales of the family she lived with. It was remarkable that no small birds attempted to rest on that tree while these two remained. At length Tibby said she must go home for she was awfully hungry, and she hoped the larder might chance to be open. Toph offered to accompany her, for he wanted to find how she managed to get into the house and all the doors closed, but Tibby was too cunning to permit him to see her plan, and she excused herself, telling him that another time she would be happy to admit him, but not to-night.

Tibby met with the fate of most untruthful people in not being believed, and Toph determined to watch her; so when Pussy reached the foot of the tree he rose in the air, and slowly flew in the direction she ran. He noted her make her way through the orchard, then climb

a tree, spring to the garden wall, and running along this till she came opposite the conservatory. She sprang on its roof, clambered up to the sloping roof of the house, and soon reached a window in a gable. She gave it a slight push with her paw and walked inside, closing the window after her. "Bravo!" said Toph to himself, "I can do what I like now;" and alighting on the window-sill, he too pushed the window with his strong beak, and flew inside, closing it after him as Tibby had done. He put his head to one side to listen, and soon heard the pat of her velvet feet down the stairs. She went right down to the basement, and then ran along a stone passage and past a large window, through which the moonlight streamed upon the opposite wall. Toph noticed a window on the side covered with wire net-work, and the next moment Tibby had sprung upon the sill to try if the frame were fastened. To her joy she found that Cook had neglected this precaution, and then she skilfully pushed the sliding frame across with her paw, and sat looking into the larder.

"That's another wrinkle for me," thought Toph, ruffling his feathers with delight. "One never loses anything by being civil. I wonder what she is looking at?"

He did not wonder long, for he managed to fly near enough to peep in, and he saw a fine fat rat just in the act of helping himself to a nice piece of salmon. Tibby crept nearer, and then there was a fearful spring, a short struggle, and the rat lay quivering in its last agony. Then Tibby took about a minute to recover breath, and spurning her fallen foe with her paw she at once attacked the dish of salmon. Her appetite was so keen that she had no time to pause and look round or she would



have seen her friend, the raven, swoop in through the window and carry off the dead rat in his beak. Once outside he laid down the body, and with all the cunning he was master of he set himself to discover some means of fastening the window. He soon discovered a little brass bolt, and closing the frame without noise he slipped it in; then he could restrain his delight no longer, but shouted through the window:

“Good night, Miss Tibby; thank you for my supper. I hope you’ll enjoy yourself in there,



particularly when they come to open the door in the morning."

Poor Tibby rushed frantically to the window, and finding it fastened mewed her appeal for liberty, but Mr. Toph was already on his way through the house.

He croaked with delight, so that Ernest awoke and called Nurse, who lay in the next room. She came in pale and trembling, for she had heard the rush of wings.

"It's a ghost, Baby," she said, while her teeth chattered with fright. Baby clapped his hands, crowed, and pointed to the door, for he knew it was his own raven, and he wanted Nurse to open the door, but of course she wouldn't understand him.

I have often wondered how little grown-up people understand babies.

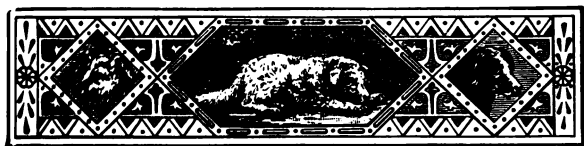
At length she got him to sleep by singing a hymn, while Toph carried his rat to the farm-yard and devoured it. He was about to fly away to his nest, when he noticed a foolish hen straying away from its companions, no doubt mistaking the moonlight for daylight, and trying to practise crowing like a cock. He stopped his flight to muse upon this curious sight, when he noticed the fox too observing her closely. She was

in the midst of her practice, and trying to strut like a cock when the fox pounced upon her, and in an instant the poor foolish hen was dead. Then Toph gave a mighty croak of delight, so loud that the startled fox dropped the hen and ran away. Now was Toph's opportunity; he soon flew down and regaled himself on the choice



portions of the poor foolish hen. He rose lazily in the air and flew towards his nest, determined to have a sound sleep after so much good food. Presently the frightened fox crept back to find only a few bones left for him to pick.

I have noticed that girls who try to look and act like boys attract more observation than is pleasant for them, and they are always punished, if not so severely as the poor hen, yet in a manner very mortifying to their self-love and pride.



## CHAPTER II.

### TIBBY'S IDLE CURIOSITY.

**W**HEN Tibby found that she couldn't get out, she made terrible havoc among the provisions within her reach, and when quite gorged she curled herself up on a piece of matting in one corner and fell soundly asleep.

Now, although you children who read this may laugh at me, I can tell you that animals brought up within the sound of a human voice are apt to partake of their master's qualities, and Tibby had something very like a conscience. She knew that she had been a thief, that she had eaten her master's favourite dish, besides smashing a lot of turkey eggs provided especially for him, and she feared punishment in the morning; and in fact she could trace the whole trouble back to her feminine curiosity, so that while she slept she started and even mewed uneasily. It was

my custom to visit the poet's study early every morning, for I found that he liked me and could recognize me easily; and better than all he never talked or made a fuss, only scribbled away. On this morning he was reading something earnestly. It was a newspaper, and I knew he seldom read the news. Suddenly I heard him exclaim:

"Ah! that is why they sent the paper. He is dead, poor fellow. I must show this to Bessie, and have the children down here till their mother gets settled."



He rose and left the room. I could see that his mind was too much disturbed for work that morning. I next visited Ernest and found his nurse dressing him, and when he was almost finished Cook opened the door and rushed in. She was dreadfully excited and angry while she told how Tibby had been hidden in the larder and what she had destroyed. Ernest listened, and lisped something that no one tried to understand.

"She must be put out of the house," said the

angry cook as a wind-up. "I'll tell Missis so, and have her drowned this very night."

"Where is she now?" asked Nurse.

"I whipped her well and put her in an empty hamper, and carried it to the odds-and-ends room. I'll get John to drown her to-night if missis don't object."

Ernest talked loudly. I knew he was pleading for Tibby's life, but of course Nurse didn't understand him, and only told him to hold his tongue.

He was vexed and angry and scarcely touched his bread-and-milk breakfast. I knew he was thinking how he could help Tibby. After breakfast Nurse put on his hat and sent him out into the garden. She knew he was quite safe there, for a high wall guarded it all round. He walked about for a little while, but did not run and play as usual. Presently he stopped opposite the open French windows of the drawing-room, as if a thought occurred to him, and then he went inside the room, turned the handle of the door, and passed through the hall till he came to the odds-and-ends room, and walked in. He had made up his mind to find Tibby and let her free if possible.

"Croak, croak, croak," sounded from the window, and Ernest looked up to see the raven

perched on the upper sash, which stood open, and stare down into the room. I knew he was laughing at Tibby in the basket and taunting her with being a prisoner. She replied by a series of loud mews, and then Ernest noticed the hamper and went over to open it. But, alas! Cook had taken the precaution to set a heavy box on the top of it. In vain Pussy pleaded in cat language to be let out, and in vain Ernest tried to move the box, while Toph nearly choked himself with his kind of laughter, but it seemed to be loud croaking; so that, what with Tibby mewling, and the raven croaking, the noise was so great that it attracted Cook to the door.

"Why, my goodness! but little ones are ever an' always at mischief. Is it a tryin' to bring down that box upon you? I wonder what your nurse is about, to let you get in here."

While Cook spoke she picked Ernest up in her arms. He kicked and screamed, of course; but she held him fast till she reached the nursery, and then put him down inside, and rang the bell for Nurse, to whom she related where she found him. "That there villain of a raven was a sittin' croakin' away," she concluded; "I do wish as Master would shoot him."

Ernest stopped screaming instantly, and tried.

to tell her he wouldn't have the raven shot, but he lisped so that both servants began to laugh at him, and then he danced and screamed; he couldn't help it, they seemed such fools to him.

"What a temper he has got, to be sure!" remarked the cook; "I shouldn't care to be his nurse."

"He's very trying, indeed," replied Nurse, "and I sha'n't leave him alone again. I suppose he got in by the drawing-room window."

"Ain't he knowin'; who'd think it now?" said Cook as she left the room.

That was a terrible day for the prisoner in the basket. She got nothing to eat, and her cries were heart-rending. Even Toph, who came frequently to the window, at length began to repent himself of his share in the mischief, and yet he had no idea for what fate poor Tibby was reserved.

The master of the house had his study in a remote wing at the back, from whence he could look out upon the grand mountains, my former home. Here no sound from the house penetrated, and Tibby's agony continued unheeded. A new baby had come to the house a fortnight before, so that the mistress had not yet begun to go about. And although Cook said she would consult the missis about getting rid of Tibby, she

did not take the trouble, but when night came, John, the man-servant, entered the room, and pushing off the heavy box, he took the hamper containing Tibby under his arm and walked out of the servants' door.

Just then Ernest was being put to bed in the room above. He was very unhappy and gave Nurse a lot of trouble; of course she did not know why, but I did. He felt that something evil was being done in the house, although he could not tell what, and it made him miserable, all the more so because it did not take definite shape.

Curious to see the tragedy played out, I followed the man and listened to poor Tibby, whose cries for help were growing fainter and fainter. Like a thing of evil the raven too flew slowly overhead in perfect silence. At length we reached the lake, and it did look lovely in the moonlight. There was a little island in the centre on which shrubs and grass grew, and one giant tree lifted its head into the clouds. Just as John paused a stately swan sailed out of its nest in the island. The moon broke forth from a bank of dark clouds and silvered the white plumage of the bird, and the rippling water. The raven flitted overhead and rested on a branch of the tree, waiting anxiously to see what was going to hap-



pen. The quiet beauty of the scene had no softening effect on the man. He stood for an instant opposite the island, then threw the hamper from him into the water, where the light fell upon it. There was a long-drawn agonizing



shriek from Tibby as the water flooded in and she felt herself sinking. The man turned and walked rapidly in the direction of home after performing his vile work.

I wondered if Toph would laugh now at poor Tibby being murdered, and all through him; but to my surprise I saw him swoop down from the tree, croak some words of encouragement to the

half-drowned cat as he caught the lid of the hamper in his strong beak and towed it to the shore.

"Never go back to your old home again," he advised as the poor wet Tibby dragged herself up the bank.

"You have saved my life, and I thank you," she whined in a weak voice.

"You had better go to Widow Green's cottage," suggested Toph after a moment's thought; "she likes cats, and keeps two already."

"Thank you, sir, I'll try her," said Tibby humbly. It seems to me as if I'd never be dry or warm again."

"O, yes, but you will, no fear for you," said the raven as he flew away; and Pussy took the road leading to the widow's house.

I have often remarked how much cats and females of the human race resemble each other in their powers of endurance; they can bear and live after treatment that one would suppose enough to kill them.

Ernest wandered about the house for days after this looking for Tibby, and Toph tried to tell him that she was safe, and although Ernest did not understand, yet the presence of the raven somehow comforted him.

That same evening, about the usual supper time of the household, I happened to look out of the dining-room window, and noticed Toph perched on the tree opposite it where he usually sat when the family were at meals; he was talking to something on the grass below.

"Go into the house boldly," he said. "They



want a cat, and even the dog Tray will be glad to see you, for he misses Tibby to fight with." I looked down and saw a fine white-and-

gray cat sitting below, and looking up anxiously at the window of the room. It was plain to me that Toph was an acquaintance of hers and had informed her of the opening in the house. Two or three days afterwards I saw her trotting about and feeling quite at home. Cook looked upon her as a nice well-conducted cat; of course she had no idea of the understanding between her and the raven.

When a little boy and girl arrived one morning I could see what the master meant that day in his library. They were the children of a friend,

and were to stop for a few weeks till their mamma had arranged a new home for them.

The raven used to watch them curiously, and wonder where they came from; but somehow Ernest did not get along well with them, because they were so much older than he was. About this time he was allowed to see his new sister baby, and he felt so delighted with her that he did not seem to want anything else to play with. He would sit gazing at her for an hour at a time, admiring the tiny dimpled hands and wondering how she could do without teeth and hair. Once he put out his finger to try what her eyes felt like. He never attempted that again, for Nurse thrust him from the room, calling him a naughty wicked boy.

I have often noted how men and women call things by wrong names. A simple mistake, a little experiment, is naughty, as well as a falsehood or a piece of wilful cruelty; so that the poor child is puzzled to know right from wrong.



## CHAPTER III.

### A DANGEROUS ADVENTURE.

**T**HE little strangers who arrived at our house on a visit were from a distant town, and the country ways and sights pleased them greatly because of their novelty. Neither of the children could see me, as I said before there were only two persons at Mountain Lodge who could see me, Baby Ernest, and his papa, the poet. I often half-suspected that the raven could see me, but I have since come to believe that he could not.

The little girl Fanny soon noticed Toph, but she disliked him very much, and took no pains to conceal her fear of him. Her brother Willie had no fear of the raven. On the contrary, he would whistle to him, and try to teach him to talk. Fanny was in the habit of feeding the little birds which flew to the nursery window. Ernest liked her to do it, and one had grown so

tame that it would hop inside and even pick crumbs from her hand. Toph felt angry and jealous at this.

At length one morning while it picked crumbs out of her hand at the table, near the open



window, I noticed Toph sitting on the sill, his eyes glittering maliciously.

Presently Willie, her brother, called Fanny away for a walk, and she left the nursery with him, and the bird flew away. But Toph did not fly away; he entered the empty room and perched on the chimney-piece with a wicked look on his face and his feathers ruffled in anger. He had his eyes fixed on a cage sitting on the window-sill; it was used by Ernest as a toy, for it resembled a baby-house somewhat; the door stood open, and

some crumbs of bread were scattered over the floor.

The raven sat watching the cage patiently; he had a strong will, and he was waiting now to bring the little bird back again to the window.

This may seem a curious power, but I can assure little boys and girls that they all possess it, and if they would only use their *will* for good it would accomplish wonders for them.

For an hour there was no sign of anything stirring, and yet Toph waited. Presently a rushing of wings was audible, and the tame bird flew in and rested for a moment on the table. Finding no food there, it almost instantly walked across to the window-sill and entered the cage by the open door. It had often done so before. Now was Toph's opportunity, for which he had waited so long, longer than he had sat in that room, for the plan had occurred to him quite a week before. He flew to the window silently, and all the intimation of his presence that the poor doomed bird had, was a black shadow obscuring the light. This was while Toph closed the door and pushed in a little peg which answered for a bolt; then with his strong beak he threw the cage from the window, and it fell among the weeds and dank grass which grew thickly underneath.

Just then Fanny came in hastily to look for her gloves, and after a search she found them. She glanced towards Toph sitting quietly on the window-sill as she left the room. In her haste she had tossed a pair of very bright tiny scissors from a drawer, and forgot to put them back again.

The door had scarcely closed behind her when Toph pounced upon them, with difficulty restraining his croaks of delight at this chance of being revenged. Only the day before Nurse had put away these very scissors, and shaking her head at Toph, who was sitting on the window-sill as usual, she said:



“I mustn’t leave anything bright lying about for you to steal, you thief.”

Toph flew straight out of the window, and across a plantation of young trees, and over several meadows and fields of grain, till he reached a farmyard. I wondered why he had taken the trouble to carry the scissors so far, but I soon found out, for he descended slowly and dropped them into a trough from which a pig was just eating his dinner. The animal stopped



and sniffed at this addition to his mess, then, as if satisfied, he went on devouring voraciously. Toph croaked with delight. The farmer's children and some of the servants heard him and threw all sorts of handy missiles at him, screaming out:

"The raven, the raven."

Toph only laughed or croaked louder as he flew out of their reach. He had disappeared altogether when the farmer himself hurried up with his gun, vowing that next time the unlucky bird came on his land he would shoot him.

I could see that this family had some unreasoning fear of the raven as well as a dislike to him.

I now turned to follow Fanny and Willie on their walk, being curious to watch these strangers. Just after they set out Fanny started and screamed at the bellowing of an innocent cow, and a little further on she ran away from a flock of geese, who gave chase for the fun of the thing. Willie laughed at her folly, but tried to make her forget her fears by pointing out the beauty of the scenery, the silvery lake at their feet, and the lofty mountains in the background. Close to their base and beyond the meadows and the grove of trees lay a portion of uncultivated land,

a kind of common; it was covered with yellow gorse and purple broom, and here the children wandered, and here I followed them, for it was nearer my old home on the mountain. They climbed up higher and higher till they could see the whole country spread out like a map below them.

Here they sat down to rest, and Fanny listened with delight to a sound most people who have visited mountains or heather-clad hills are familiar with, that is a tinkle, tinkle, as if innumerable fairy bells were in motion. This is the only comparison I can make, as I am best acquainted with fairy bells. Suddenly there was heard just above them a mighty rushing of feet, and Fanny screamed wildly and threw herself flat on the heather, drawing the skirt of her dress over her head in an agony of terror. On came the terrible enemies as she supposed them to be, till they rushed past her, and Willie laughed heartily, for it was only a flock of sheep.

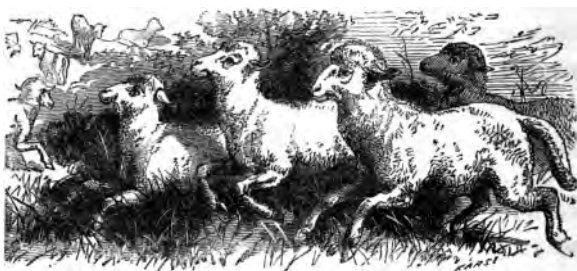
"What's the lassie greetin' aboot?" asked a rough, but not unkindly voice.

"She's frightened at the sheep," said Willie as well as he could reply for laughing.

"Hoots, lassie, one wad think ye'd seen a kelpie, lettin' sic a skirl," and the shepherd

watched her as she put down her skirts and looked up at him.

"Dinna be feart o' naething, lassie," he said rather in a contemptuous tone; "or ye'll be na wiser than the sheep, runnin' frae their ain shadows." The shepherd was mistaken in this, however, for it was the appearance of our friend



Mr. Fox that had frightened them, and I felt that Toph could not be far away, he knew how to wait for the spoil.

The shepherd asked the children where they had come from, and being satisfied on this point he advised them not to wander too far from home, and then went after his sheep.

Fanny proposed that they should turn back, but Willie had made up his mind to walk as far as a grove of trees which crowned the summit of a little hill in the distance, and Fanny would

not dare to go back alone, so they walked on together till they reached the grove. It was much larger than they imagined, in fact almost a forest, and they found a pretty rustic seat under one of the trees, where they sat down to rest. Presently Willie noticed smoke curling up a little way off among the trees, as he supposed, and he asked Fanny to come with him and find what it meant; but she told him that she felt too tired, and she would sit here till his return and shouldn't feel at all afraid. So Willie started in the direction of the smoke, and for a time Fanny sat quite still enjoying the shade after the hot sunshine. Then she heard a voice in the distance call:

"Fanny, Fanny!"

She felt frightened at first; then concluding that it must be Willie, she ventured out from the shelter of the tree and walked in the direction he had taken. Again her name was called; this time the sound came from far in advance of her, and she quickened her pace. Suddenly a cry.

"Fanny, Fanny!" sounded a little to the left, and so close that she replied:

"I'm coming, Willie, where are you?" and she left the little beaten path between the trees and plunged in among the grass and shrubs at the

side. She paused when she had got a yard or two, and looked round again, asking:

“Where are you, Willie?”

Her name was repeated in a still louder key, and she went forward another few yards and again paused. She did not see the mischievous raven flitting about among the trees a little in advance of her. Again her name was repeated, this time in tones of entreaty, and she ran through the underwood towards the open ground she could see between the trees in the distance.

Meantime Willie had satisfied his curiosity respecting the smoke—it was from the keeper’s hut—and he returned to the seat where he had left Fanny, to find that she was gone. Knowing her timidity, he at once believed that some harm had happened to her, and he bitterly reproached himself with leaving her for even a few moments. Suddenly he heard his name called in curious choked tones, and he ran in the direction from whence the voice proceeded, calling:

“Fanny, Fanny!” in his turn. The more haste, a proverb says, the worse speed, and so it was with poor Willie, for his toe caught on a projecting root of a tree and he fell at full length upon the turf. Just then he heard a wicked croak, croak, in front of him. It was Toph: he could

not help laughing at the two children hunting for each other, and all through him.

"I see you," cried Willie glancing up, while he rose from the ground slowly; "you have been



calling and not Fanny." As if to verify his words Toph screamed:

"Willie! Fanny!" alternately, and then croaked delightedly.

"What am I to do?" said Willie to himself when he regained his feet, "she is always getting into trouble." Then he called his sister's name loudly, and Toph rose slowly in the air, and flying in an opposite direction screamed "Fanny, Fanny!" I really pitied the boy's perplexity, for should his sister hear her name called in different directions she would be completely puzzled. Then he

thought of the shepherd; if he could only meet him again he might help him to find Fanny. He gave up calling now and ran along, but more carefully than at first. He rather ascended towards the hills while Fanny had taken quite an opposite direction towards the lake. Presently he could see the sheep dotted here and there a little beyond, and he hastened on more rapidly, so that he came upon the shepherd stretched at full length behind a cluster of whin bushes.

"Have you seen my sister?" he asked breathlessly. The shepherd sat up and looked at the boy meditatively.

"Is it the feckless<sup>1</sup> lassie that's bauld enough to rin awa' by hersel'?" he asked.

"Yes, yes; she was afraid of the sheep, but she came to look for me, and I suppose she has lost her way."

"I didna see her. She's maybe gane doon till the water side; lassies is likest to gang doon, I ken. If Mad Peg meets her she'll be scared oot o' her senses."

"Where does Mad Peg live?" asked Willie.

The shepherd pointed with his finger across the country, in the direction of the lake, to a pile of crumbling walls without a roof.

<sup>1</sup> Silly.

"It was ance her faither's hamestead and she staps in it whiles."

Willie waited for nothing more, but set off in the direction indicated.

The shepherd looked after the boy for a moment, then jumped to his feet suddenly and whistled for his dog, gave him some directions about taking care of the sheep, and hurried off with his long strides after Willie.

"Haith it wadna be neighbourly to let them bairns rin about an' lose themselves; I'll gang a bit wi' him," he said to himself.

In a few minutes he had overtaken Willie, who was very glad of his company.

We must return to Fanny, whom we left running along, as she fancied, in the direction her brother had taken, and as the shepherd remarked it happened to be down towards the lake. It was much easier to go down than to climb up, so Fanny went on pretty rapidly. The sun was shining, the birds were singing, and the little girl felt happy, as she thought, even should Willie not turn up, she could find her way home by the shores of the lake.

I have often noted that mortals without much fancy or imagination are frequently most easy and confident in their minds when nearest to



great danger. So it was with poor Fanny. She actually began to sing in company with the birds, but her song was changed to a wild cry of terror when she felt her arm grasped firmly, and looked up to see the face of a strange woman, and a pair of wild blue eyes bent upon her inquiringly.

"You're Janet Clysdel," she said rapidly; "I've waited for you long, and now—" she paused, while her wrinkled face was brought closer down to the child's, and she smiled hideously. Fanny could not utter a word after that first scream, but all the tales she had read and heard of witches came into her mind; they were few, but impressive.

Surely this old woman with her small wrinkled face, wild eyes, long hooked nose, and thin lips closed tightly over toothless gums, must be a witch. Then she wore an enormous bonnet of bygone fashion, decorated with coloured ribbons and wild flowers, while an old cloak of faded red was clasped round her shoulders.

"Come along with me," she said, as if satisfied with her scrutiny of the child's face. But sheer terror forced Fanny to speak.

"I can't go with you, I don't know you."

"Dear me! not know me, is it? an' you coming that evening; it was a bonny evening too, and

you took away my Polly with you, you did, and pushed her into the water. The law let you off, but I won't. Do you hear? Come along."

"I don't know what you mean; pray let my arm go, you are hurting me," said Fanny, the tears starting to her eyes.

"I'll kill you here if you won't come quietly," hissed the woman in her ear. Fanny called loudly.

"Willie, Willie!" It was of no use, and only caused the mad woman to grip her arm more tightly, and almost drag her along towards the lake. She begged of her to let go her arm, and promised to walk with her, but the only result was a bitter mocking laugh from the woman. They had almost reached the lake when I noticed Toph wheeling about in the air over their heads; he was croaking viciously, and sometimes laughing in his own fashion. Poor Fanny gave herself up for lost; she thought this terrible woman must intend to murder her, and she was not far wrong. At length they reached the edge of the lake, and the woman paused; she was tired with her hasty walk, and Fanny felt so weak that she could scarcely stand on her feet.

"Now you thought to escape me, you did, and I've waited and watched for this day; I

knew it would come some time; revenge is sweet, sweet."

"Croak, croak, croak," screamed the raven overhead, and once more Fanny called:

"Willie, Willie, save me."

"How dare you scream?" asked the woman. "My Polly didn't scream, she went down, down into the water—it was cold, very cold—you must try it too, then you'll be quiet as she was, and white and cold."

"Willie, Willie, Willie!" screamed the raven. He had been flying in circles overhead, and wheeling nearer and nearer. The mad woman had grasped the child's arm tighter, and pushed her close to the edge of the water. The scream of the bird startled her, and she relaxed her hold. With a strength born of terror Fanny wrenched her arm out of the slackened grasp and sped away along the bank. But the effort was a vain one; the mad woman rushed after her, and once more held her in a vice-like grasp. Again Fanny screamed for help, this time not in vain. She had given herself up for lost, and scarcely resisted as the woman dragged her back to the spot she had quitted a moment before.

"Here you pushed her in, here you shall—" the woman paused exhausted. Fanny had closed

her eyes so as to shut out the dark water from her sight, and the face of the terrible woman.

"You stand with your face to the water, and your back to me. Face foremost she went in, face down you shall go. Now—"

"Pray have mercy upon me, I never pushed any one in," exclaimed the child, clutching the woman's cloak in her agony.

There was a hurried rush of feet across the rank grass, and next moment the shepherd had grasped the woman and dragged her back from the water by main force. She dropped her hold on the child's arm, while Willie hurried forward crying:

"Fanny, Fanny, I have had such a job to find you, but what—what's the matter?" he exclaimed. The child had turned quite pale, and fell fainting on the grass. He brought some water in his hat instantly, and sprinkled it on her face by the shepherd's directions.

"Poor lassie, she's been frightened amaist to death; it's war nor my sheep. But hoo daur you meddle wi' her?" he asked of the woman.

"She's Janet—Janet that enticed my Polly and drowned her," she replied. "I must drown her, I've sworn it."

"She's no Janet; ye're daft, Peggy—Janet's

dead lang years ago. Gae hame, guid woman, an' let ither folks' bairns alane."

The woman looked at him for a moment as if vainly trying to remember something, then without giving another look towards the little girl she turned and walked away. Fanny had recovered her consciousness by this time, but both children were thankful when the honest shepherd offered to see them safe home.

.



## CHAPTER IV.

### POOR ROBIN.

**T**HE kind shepherd saw the children safe home, and had a talk with the poet himself about the poor maniac, telling him the history of her life, and why she had lost her senses. From the bare outline the poet guessed the thoughts and feelings which had sent the mind astray, and he said he would make it a point to see her some day soon, and try and have her placed where she would be taken care of. Her story he afterwards made into a very beautiful poem.

Fanny related to Nurse and Ernest what had befallen her; the latter sat with his eyes wide open and his thumb in his mouth, listening eagerly; and although Nurse did not think he heard or understood the story, yet he knew enough of it to raise in his little head all sorts of foolish fears and which would trouble him some other day.

There was no more wandering away from the house for the children, but they had plenty of room in the grounds to amuse themselves, and Fanny became more of a companion for Ernest in the walled garden which we have mentioned before.

They were out playing here on one sunshiny morning about two days after Fanny's adventure, when Ernest's keen eyes noticed something lying among the long grass just under the nursery window, and Fanny ran off to see what it was.

"It's your cage-house, Ernest," she said, as she picked it up and carried it out to the path. "Why, it's fastened, and there's something inside."

To open the cage and take out the bird was the work of a moment.

"O dear! it's dead, dead," she exclaimed, holding it up and looking at it pitifully, till the tears came into her eyes. "My pretty robin redbreast that I fed in the nursery."

Ernest toddled across to her and looked at the bird with awe and curiosity. She put it down on the grass carefully, and still Ernest watched it, then he went nearer and touched the wing and turned it over.

"It's dead," repeated Fanny.

Ernest had no idea of what she meant; he had never seen death. He brought out a piece of cake from the pocket of his pinafore and put it to the bird's beak, but of course it never moved. He crumbled it down and then stood watching and waiting patiently for some sign of motion, while Fanny wondered if he would understand what it meant. Presently a sparrow hopped down from a tree and began to pick up the crumbs. The contrast between the living bird and the dead one was too much for Ernest; he suddenly comprehended the pain and the mystery, and burst into tears, sobbing so violently that the sparrow took fright and flew away.



Willie heard Ernest's voice while passing the garden gate, and he came in to see what was the matter.

"Why, who has killed Cock Robin?" he asked, lifting the bird and looking at it. "Some one



fastened the door of the cage and threw it down here, and the poor thing has been starved to death," replied Fanny indignantly.

"Croak, croak, croak," sounded just above them. It was Toph, of course, perched on the tree quite near, and looking down on his dead rival. He was laughing, as usual, at the mischief.

"There's that naughty raven," said Fanny, looking up at the tree; "I shouldn't wonder but he did it."

"I'm sure he didn't," said Willie confidently.

"How could he fasten the door as you say it was fastened? it must have been Nurse, or Ernest might have done it in mistake."

"What's that you say about me?" asked Nurse, looking out of the window. "I wish you would tell me, Miss Fanny, what you have done with my little scissors. I have been a-looking for them this half hour."

"I don't know anything about them, Nurse; I haven't had them for a long time; but do you see the poor Robin I used to feed?" and she pointed to the dead bird. Willie says you must have shut the door of the cage upon it, and some one pushed it down here by accident, perhaps Ernest, and it was starved to death."

"I'm sure I wouldn't take the trouble to shut

up a bird in a cage, Miss Fanny. I'll come down and see it."

So Susan came down and heard all about the finding of it, while Ernest, who had ceased sobbing to listen, now sat on the grass, his face all tear-stained, and his consolation in his mouth.

"It was that raven did it, and no one else," affirmed Nurse on hearing the story. "I missed the cage after you left for your walk that day, and Ernest was asleep when you left, so he couldn't have done it; and my scissors too, that thief has stolen them, I'm sure."

"Croak, croak, croak," said the raven, much as he might have laughed ha! ha! ha!

"I do hate that bird," said Nurse, looking up. "I wish as master would shoot him; he's unlucky about the house, I know."

"Dood Toph, poor birdie," lisped Ernest, first looking at the raven and then at the dead bird. Toph knew his name, and perched a little nearer, setting his head knowingly on one side.

"I hardly think Toph could have done it," said Willie.

"Susan, Susan," screamed Toph in high glee at being noticed. Susan was Nurse's name.

"You see he blames it on you," said Willie laughing, but Ernest and Fanny kept grave;

they couldn't laugh while looking at the dead bird.

"I must have my scissors anyhow," said Nurse, going towards the house, "and if that thief has them I'll make him turn them up. There's Pussy, if you don't bury Robin she'll eat him for you;" and she laughed.

"Nurse is very naughty," said Fanny, as she lifted up the bird. "Pussy wouldn't eat it."

"Wouldn't she? Try her," laughed Willie. "Even Toph would eat it."

"Gib birdie to Baby," lisped Ernest.

"Why, it begins to smell," said Willie. "Let's have a funeral, that's fine fun."

"It's no fun at all, Willie," said his sister gravely, "but we had better bury the poor thing properly."

"Toph, come along, Toph, you'll be chief mourner, you are properly dressed in black;" and Willie whistled and held out his finger.

Toph came flying down, his eyes twinkling with delight. Then, as if he understood what was required of him, he seated himself at a respectful distance from the dead bird, drooping his black wings like plumes, and bowing his head as if in woe—only for the twinkle in his eye he had all the appearance of chief mourner.

"Dood Toph," said Ernest caressingly.

Clever as he was it never entered his little head that the raven was the murderer of his robin redbreast. Willie meantime had gone away and routed out a pasteboard box with a lid, and Fanny brought a pretty piece of print she had saved to dress her dolls. Ernest watched her fold this carefully round the bird and then place it in the box. Willie brought a toy cart of Ernest's and put the box in it; then he left them and went away to a distant corner of the garden to dig a hole under a laburnum tree. They waited patiently for his return, Ernest wondering why the bird was put in a box, and Toph quite enjoying the whole affair. Presently Willie returned and put the procession in order. He went first, drawing along the hearse, as he called the cart. Ernest followed it closely, while Toph was with some difficulty persuaded to hop along by its side, and Fanny brought up the rear. Presently the procession reached the grave, not in the order they started certainly, for Ernest wanted to peep into the hole, and Toph hopped about in a lively fashion, very unbecoming to the chief mourner. Willie placed the coffin in the grave, and proposed that they should sing a hymn over it. To this Fanny had no objection;

even Ernest forgot his trouble so far as to clap his hands; and Toph croaked loudly, varying the exercise by crowing like a cock and barking like Tray. These imitations he gave when particularly pleased. He knew the robin was shut up in the box, and that he was in favour. His plan had succeeded, and he was happy; he had no sorrow, no remorse. After some little arrangement as to which tune they should sing, for their stock was limited, and a slight alteration of words to suit the solemn occasion, Willie struck up a doleful ditty with the following words:

‘Poor pet Robin, all the children cry,  
Poor pet Robin, once sang in the sky,  
Poor pet Robin, came down for bread,  
Got caged and starved, now he is dead,  
Poor pet Robin, hide him under ground,  
Strew bright flowers, o’er his little mound,  
Poor pet Robin, never more you’ll sing,  
Sitting at our window, in the early spring.  
Good-bye, Robin, sleep the long night through,  
Till the world grows young, and all that’s old grows new.  
Good-bye, Robin, in that endless Spring,  
In that fadeless sunlight, we shall hear thee sing.

*Chorus*—Good-bye, Robin, sleep the long night through,  
Till the world grows young, and all that’s old grows new.”

Fanny did her best to assist Willie in the hymn, as he called it. Ernest sang lustily, and

attempted to lisp the words, while Toph croaked and crowed alternately, and looked the very picture of a cunning fellow, highly delighted, but trying to seem as grave as possible. During the singing Willie had put the earth over the little grave with his toy shovel, and then they all turned away, Toph hopping after them quite familiarly. The day now commenced to be oppressively hot, even under the shade of the trees, and Willie proposed that they should accompany him to the porch of the wash-house, and they could sail his toy ship on a tub of water he had noticed standing there. Fanny objected, for she knew Nurse would be angry if Ernest played with water, because one day he had come in with his shoes and socks all wet, and she forgot to change them, so he caught a bad cold, and she was blamed for not taking care of him. Willie ran off by himself, and left his sister and Ernest to amuse themselves as they best might.

But Ernest caught Fanny's hand, and begged her as well as he could to only allow him to see Willie's boat.

"You mustn't touch the water, Ernest," she said as she took the child's hand and followed Willie. But Ernest said nothing, for he was thinking he would touch the water if he could

get near enough, just because he was forbidden. They soon came to the porch, and Ernest shouted with delight when he saw Willie on his knees beside the tub, and puffing out his cheeks to make the wind to blow his boat along.

"Well, so you came after all. You try and be a wind, Ernest," said Willie, rising to his feet.



"No, no, he'd best not go near the water," said Fanny. "He might make all his clothes wet."

"S'all go an' be wind," lisped Ernest, and suit-

ing the action to the word he went over beside the tub and blew vigorously. He tried to clutch the ship, but Willie would not permit him to touch it.

"No, no, Ernest, you might smash the masts."

"Master Willie, Master Willie, where are you? Master's going to fish, would you like to go with him?"

"I should very much," replied Willie, jumping up and hurrying away. "You take care Ernest doesn't break my ship, Fanny," he shouted back.

"I wish I could go with them," thought Fanny; "he is not kind at all to run off like that and leave me with only Baby."

Ernest was too busy blowing the ship to take any notice of Willie's departure. Suddenly a voice which seemed to come from the garden called:

"Fanny, Fanny!"

Now Fanny was not at all a thoughtful child, or careful of others. She was a little bit selfish, and just then she was thinking how nice it would be if Willie should relent and bring her too. The voice seemed an answer to her thoughts, and she ran round the house to the front, where the call came from.

I couldn't follow her just then, for a dreadful fear came over me as if something was about to happen to my charge, Ernest, and I would not leave him. In vain I tried to whisper some of my fears to him, but he was quite deaf to my warnings, and completely engrossed by the toy. Suddenly he looked round and found himself alone. Now he thought he would grasp the toy. It had floated to the further side of the large tub, and instead of walking round to it he reached across. He gave a little scream as he overbalanced, and plumped in head foremost.



What should I do? I was in agony, for I had no power to save him; must I watch him die? Suddenly Tray came up and began to bark, then I heard Toph croak wildly over the porch. Only to be able to help I would give up a portion of my allotted time upon earth. The power I wished for was mine. I assisted Ernest to raise his head, then to scramble out. He began to tremble and cry bitterly; no matter, he was alive. Tray redoubled his barking, and Toph called, "Willie, Fanny, Susan," alternately.

After a long time Nurse came, and, horrified at seeing the dripping Ernest, took him up in her arms and tried to stop his crying, and carried him inside, asking him how he got into the tub, for she could see he had been in, and above all how he got out; but Ernest was too much frightened to reply.

Before I followed him I saw Toph swoop down and pick up the toy ship in his strong beak, then he rose higher and higher in the air, and disappeared behind the grove of trees. When I went inside I found Nurse had undressed Ernest and put him to bed, after giving him a warm bath. The little fellow had fallen into a pleasant sleep.

"You had no business to leave him, Miss

Fanny," she was saying to the little girl as I entered the nursery. "He got into the tub somehow, and I'm surprised that he could get out at all, for it's deep, and he was wet right over."

"I thought some one called me, and I know they did too," she said in defence.

"There's no excuse for you, Miss Fanny," said Nurse severely. "I wouldn't have left the child, only that I thought you would take care of him."

"Here's Farmer Jones a-wantin' to see the master," said Cook, putting in her head at the door and speaking softly. "He says as he's got something belonging to this house, and he wants to see all of us servants first. How's the Baby now?"

"O, all right again, I hope," replied Nurse, glancing towards the bed. "He's sleeping nicely."

"Then just step down for a minute. I do wonder what he wants," said Cook.

The nurse walked down-stairs quietly, and Fanny, quite as curious as Tibby had been once, followed her. The parlour-maid was talking to the farmer, and the nurse and cook joined them.

"Are you all the women folks in the house?" he asked.

"All except missis an' her nurse; they're both

upstairs this three weeks past, you know," said Cook.

"Yes, yes, we heard tell o' it. I hopes the lady an' the bairn's doin' well."

"Yes, thank you."

"Then I s'pose one of you has lost something about ten days ago? Think a bit."

The servants looked at each other, but none of them remembered losing anything.

"You lost your scissors, Nurse," said Fanny, coming forward.

"So I did, of course, Miss Fanny, but what could Mr. Jones know about that? Just go right back to the nursery, and don't meddle with what don't concern you." While she spoke the farmer's face was overspread with a broad grin, and he put his hand in his waistcoat pocket, and taking out a pair of scissors he said, "Don't be too fast, young woman, the child's right enough, if these be yours;" and he held forward the article for inspection.

"Why, yes, they are, to be sure," exclaimed Nurse in surprise; "but however did you get them?"

"Get them?" exclaimed the farmer excitedly; "they've cost me siller, I can tell you; killed one of my prime pigs, stuck in his throat. I knew

somethin' was bound to happen when that villainous raven came near."

"The raven?" "Toph the thief?" asked the servants in chorus.

"I suppose he stole them and hid them where your pig got them," said Nurse, examining the scissors.

"Stole them an' put them in his mess, lassie, that's what he did; an' now I want to see the governor, and settle with him about killin' that same raven. I've watched him a-comin' to and fro between here and the farm, and I won't have him about no more."

"And you're right too, no one could blame you," said Nurse. "He's a bad, thieving bird, besides being unlucky."

"That he is," replied the farmer; "didn't my best plough-horse go lame when he flew across the field, and didn't I lose my purse at the fair when he flew across the road after I started for town."

"Croak, croak, croak."

"There he's now, hanged if he ain't!" ejaculated the farmer, rushing out, followed by the servants. But he was only in time to see Toph rise in the air and disappear towards the mountains.

"A cunnin' thief!" remarked the farmer as he

turned inside and accepted a seat in the parlour, determined to wait for the master's return.

"I mean to ask the governor to poison him, or hand him over to me, for I hear he's quite at home in this house, and I can never get a shot at him, he's so cunnin'." The cook had come into the room to have a chat.

"Master's rare fond o' him, I believe," she said confidentially.

"Fond or no fond, if he's an honest man he'll not object to have a thief put out of the way. Hangin' or drownin's too good for him."

"I'm sure he won't make no objection, Mr. Jones, for there never was a nicer or juster gentleman than our master, though I say it," said Cook, wiping the table with her apron as an excuse for lingering in the room, "an' there's not one of us as don't hate that same raven."

"Poor Pussy," said the good-natured farmer looking down at the white cat, who had come over from the rug, and was purring and rubbing herself against his legs. "She's a fine cat and no mistake."

"Yes, that she is; we had one a terrible thief, like the raven, but we drowned her; that's what ought to be done with him." She left the room for some time, and then returned with the

news of her master's approach. "There's master now a-coming in at the gate; he's caught no fish, I can see; he's a-goin' to his own study. I'll tell him you're waitin' to see him;" and Cook went out to return in a minute with the message that her master would see Mr. Jones in his own room. So the farmer followed her along the hall and up the stairs, while I noticed that the white cat looked round slyly, then trotted off through the garden. Once there she leaped the wall, and then ran through the shrubbery at the back of the house like a hare, across the fields to the common, and still at the same headlong scamper, till she had got half-way up the hill. Here she paused and looked round, mewing in a peculiar fashion. Presently Toph joined her, and they began to talk earnestly together.

Now I found that this new cat was a friend of Toph's, and that she was warning him of his danger. He heard what she had to say, then sent her back to learn more, desiring her to meet him at midnight in this same spot.

Pussy hurried back to the house, and I followed. Instead of going upstairs she turned into the scullery, and sitting down on the mat at the door she watched Willie eagerly. He had got a little fish in a glass dish full of water, and

was amusing himself by watching its motions. The cat watched it too, but Willie never noticed her, and when she heard Cook's voice in the passage I observed that she ran and hid herself under the table, so that no one could see her.

"Time for bed, Master Willie," said Cook;



"Nurse's a-callin' you. Best put that glass dish on the table; nothing won't hurt it till you come back in the mornin'."

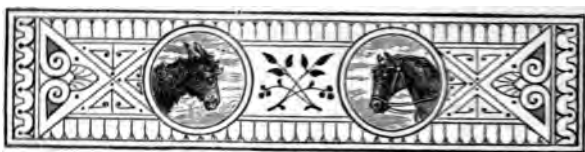
Willie left his treasure reluctantly, and Cook put the dish on the table.

"It wouldn't do to have Master Ernest see it," she remarked, "for he nigh drowned himself after your ship this day, but he don't often come down here."

"I forgot about it," said Willie as he ran away.  
"I must get my ship before I go to bed."

Cook went out and closed the door. The white cat listened till her steps died away in the distant stone passage, then she made a spring upon the table. A dextrous movement of her paw sent the dish over, and the unfortunate fish disappeared down Pussy's throat. She licked her lips with satisfaction, washed her face clean, then sprung through the open window, and in two minutes more she was lying apparently asleep on the rug in the parlour, where the farmer had noticed her.





## CHAPTER V.

### GONE AWAY.

**I**HAD not heard the chat between the farmer and my master (I cannot help calling the poet master, because he knew me so well and could make use of me when he pleased); but when I visited his study that night, after every one had retired to rest, I saw that he looked more thoughtful than usual, and instead of sitting at his desk writing, he walked about his room talking aloud at times, and smoking his meerschaum. The window stood open, for the night was very sultry, and the lamp on his table burned low. Presently the door opened and a lady came in. She looked very thin and delicate, and almost as white as the garment she wore, but she was very pretty.

"So you start to-morrow for the south coast, my dear!" he said. I have had a letter saying your apartments are quite ready for you; it will do you and Baby immense service."

"You will follow us in a week?" she said; "I shouldn't be happy without you." He smiled as he replied:

"Of course the house here won't look like home for me."

Then I heard their plans discussed. Ernest and Nurse were to go with mamma, as well as her own maid, while Cook and a housemaid were to remain.

"I want you to take an addition to the family, if possible," said the poet. "That unfortunate raven, no doubt he is mischievous, but I believe more is laid to his charge than he is guilty of. There is my neighbour farmer Jones; he declares the scissors his pig swallowed were put in the trough by the bird, and that he is most unlucky about a place. Only that the man believes what he says sincerely, I could laugh at him."

"The scissors belong to Ernest's nurse," said the lady.

"No doubt, my dear, but we get milk from the farm, do we not?"

"O yes."

"Well, is it not likely enough that one of the servants sent with it morning and evening had found the scissors lying somewhere about the garden or grounds. Ernest might have carried them out, or Fanny, or perhaps Nurse herself."

"I never thought of that," said the lady, "but it is quite probable."

"More than probable, almost certain," said the poet, and all sorts of possibilities floated through his mind as I perched upon his shoulder. "It would be a shame to have the bird shot, just to please an ignorant and superstitious prejudice. Mr. Jones is a very decent man, and his loss is a serious one. No doubt his family would encourage him to believe that a dumb bird was guilty rather than one of themselves. Now instead of giving up the raven to his tender mercies, I propose that we take him with us, my dear, if you have no objection; he is almost tame, and is certain to prove very amusing to the children."

"I have no objection at all; but to his being dumb, as you say, that is a mistake; he has learned to say several words, and you remember what Willie told us of his calling him on that day he and Fanny got lost."

"O, yes, he knows the names of the family pretty well. So it is settled; when Toph pays his first visit we shall detain him and cage him. There is an old parrot cage that will answer for him. I must ask some one to rout it out of the lumber room."

So it was settled Toph was not to be shot, but made a prisoner. I wondered where his friend

the white cat could be now, while this discussion was going on.

The master had scarcely done speaking when I heard the fluttering of wings at the open window, and Toph himself appeared perched upon the sill. The moon had not yet risen, and the night was rather darker than usual, so that Toph looked weird and strange as he sat with the lamplight shining upon him, and revealing his form dimly, and his glittering eyes against the dark background.

"Why, there he is!" exclaimed the lady, suddenly looking up.

"And the lamplight o'er him streaming, throws his shadow on the floor," quoted the poet.

"Yes, but we want something more than the shadow," said the lady smiling. And she began to talk to Toph, and encourage him to come in.

I have noticed that poetically-minded people, or fanciful people, generally manage to get along best with practical, sensible people. Now the poet, my master, was all feeling and fancy, while his wife was remarkably practical.

Toph took no notice of her coaxing for a long time, but kept his eyes fixed upon the poet's face.

"Come in, Toph, he said reassuringly. "We mean you no harm."

Then gravely the bird flitted inside the room and seated itself on the table, while the lady walked to the window and closed the casement noiselessly.

"He looks as if he knew what was going to happen," said my master. And I knew he did; he felt he was in danger from the farmer, and he knew the poet was his friend; so far his instinct carried him. Then the bell was rung and the parlour-maid answered it. She was desired to bring the parrot cage from the lumber-room, and a piece of meat for Toph. There was no sign that the bird understood the order, only an extra brightening of the eye when his name was mentioned. When the servant returned with the articles she had cunningly placed the beef inside the cage, and set it down in a dark corner of the room, and the white cat came in with her, and lay down on the hearth-rug without glancing towards the bird.

"A contrast," remarked the poet; "white cat and black bird, no doubt they are mortal enemies. It seems a mean thing to do," he went on as he lifted the cage, and put it full in view of the raven, pointing to the piece of meat at the same time, "but it is only for his good; the farmer would be sure to take his life."

The raven, still preserving his gravity, hopped over in leisurely fashion towards the cage, and

once inside, the lady closed the door, slipping the bolt.

I observed that the white cat lay blinking from her place on the hearth-rug at the whole business.

"Poor Toph prisoned at last," said the poet as he lifted the cage and set it on a side-board. "I can't bear him to look at me; I feel guilty."

"Never mind," said his wife, "he'll soon like his new home, I have no doubt."

I heard a few dismal croaks from the raven when, after swallowing the meat, he found himself a prisoner; but I could not stay to learn any more, as I had received a summons which I dared not disobey; and as closed doors and bolts made no difference to me, I found myself in a shorter time than it takes to say, "Hey presto!" on my mountain side, among the gorse, and broom, and heather, and in the presence of my mother.

She was very stern and severe in her manner towards me, for I had broken one of her commands in assisting Ernest.

"The time for assisting mortals with physical aid is past," she said sternly. "In the olden days, when they had not denied our power and our very existence as they do now, we might aid them, but now that power is no longer to be exercised by us."

.

"I shall never disobey again," I pleaded, "if I am forgiven this time."

"You cannot escape the penalty," she said.

"And that penalty?" I asked.

"You must leave the family you live in for three years," she said.

I begged permission just to see Ernest once again, before I retired from his presence. I would have borne twice as much to save the child from death. My prayer was granted, and next morning, as the sun rose, I peeped into the room where Ernest slept. I gazed upon him till I could gaze no more. What might not happen during my long absence. And I had come to love the child as no mortal could love, because it was a pure and unselfish feeling. I wandered all over the house, and saw that preparations for departure were being made rapidly. Then I heard that Toph, the raven, had somehow escaped during the night; the cage had been unfastened, and he had disappeared, leaving only one black feather behind to tell of his presence.

The servants looked at each other and whispered mysteriously; they always knew that he was no raven, but an evil spirit. Even the poet himself was surprised, and could not account for the cage being opened. No one thought of the

white cat, but I knew how the whole thing was managed, and Toph of course knew how to get out of the attic window.

I have often noticed that mortals are too stupid to account for many natural things that happen, and put them down to something supernatural, and those incidents which are really supernatural they set down to natural causes, and are quite proud when they find an explanation for them.

The last look I had at Ernest was after his breakfast. Nurse had set him down on the carpet, and put a slate into his hand to amuse him, while she packed up his clothes in a trunk. He would be a boy of six years old when I should see him again, if I ever saw him.

I wandered about the garden, looking at every spot where Ernest had played; and then from the garden to the meadow beyond, with its gnarled oak-tree in the middle, and the lake lying so calmly at its foot.

Here I saw Willie and Fanny; they were out already to enjoy the beauties of the country,





before returning once more to their mother in town. I had heard they were to go with the poet's wife and Ernest part of their way home that afternoon. I wondered what they were so much pleased with, and found it was a bird's nest. A lark flew singing overhead, but I felt



as if I could cry. You needn't laugh, for fairies can cry like mortals, unfortunately.

"I should so like to have that pretty speckled egg!" said Willie.

"What would the poor birdie say when she found it gone?" put in Fanny.

"Ah! yes," I thought; "she is more careful of the happiness of others than the boy. I wonder if that is the nature of girls, or if she is better than most of them."

I dare not return to the house again, so I

wandered about in the woods like a restless spirit, as I was, waiting to have one more look at Ernest as he passed along the road. Two little girls were picking flowers, they were daughters to farmer Jones, and they chatted and laughed in the bright sunshine.

Somehow the air seemed purer and sweeter that day, and all the world looked brighter as I was going to leave it, for our home was far below the lake and the mountain, although at times we were permitted to ascend, and hold high revel on the mountain side.

"There's the coach, Maggie," called out the youngest of the girls. She was standing at an opening between the trees, from which the road, winding like a white thread, was visible.

I saw the coach too; the windows were open, but, alas! the blinds were closed, to keep out the sun I suppose, and I could not see inside it. There was a pile of luggage on the top. Yes, they were gone, and I must go too, for the moment was at hand on which I had been roused into life from the blossom of the broom by that look of Ernest's eyes, and that same moment my absence of three years was to begin.

"The lady and the children too are gone," said the eldest sister.

“And that bad raven, he’s with them. The gentleman told father he’d send him.”



“I’m so glad!” replied the other.

“And I’m so sorry!” I said to myself. Just then I heard the fairy bells tinkle. So farewell Ernest and his home for three years to come.



## PART II.

### CHAPTER VI.

#### AFTER THREE YEARS' BANISHMENT.



ILLINGLY would I relate my experience in Fairy-land during those three years, but I am not permitted to do so, and I must begin where I left off.

This time I had not to wait for some human being to recognize me, I had only to mount upon a thistle-down and float in through the open window with a sunbeam. Ah, yes! the room was exactly the same; tables and chairs as if I had left them yesterday, but who could that little boy be, seated at the table with his eyes fixed so steadily on an open book?



Could it be my baby Ernest? Yes, it must be; the eyes were the same, the hair the same, and the same soul lit up the face. He had changed and grown greatly, that was certain.

How is it, I wonder, that chairs and tables remain the same, and human beings change? I suppose those who have least soul change least—that's worth noting.

The door opened and Susan came in. Yes it was Susan, although she had changed too. She was dressed in black. Some one must be dead in the family; could it be the poet? Her words settled this point—for she said:

"I wish you'd go and put on a clean collar, Master Ernest; your papa and aunt will be here presently. I do hope as she'll not be cross and faultfinding like most old maids; if she do I sha'n't stop."

Ernest looked up while she talked. He had not heard half of what she said, that was evident, for he never moved, but went on reading. She lifted a handsome flower-vase from the mantelpiece.

"I must fill this to make the place look as bright as possible," she said. She was leaving the room when Ernest suddenly looked up.

"Is Harry gone out?" he asked.

"Yes, he's always out and about mischief. If

I was your papa I'd never bring a boy like that to be with my son."

"He's my cousin, you know, Susan," said Ernest reprovingly.

"Cousin or no," muttered the girl as she went out, "I know your poor dear mamma, if she were alive, wouldn't have him under the roof."

So that pale delicate lady was dead, and what had become of the baby Ernest used to be so fond of? it would now be able to run about. I was wondering at this and many other things, when Susan came into the room in a hurry with the vase full of flowers. She set it down on the table, just at Ernest's elbow, and went out again; but a cat came in with her, not Tibby, nor the white one, but a gray and white new cat. I was speculating as to whether this cat was related to the white one, and what had become of her, when pussy sprang on the chair, then planted her front paws on the table, and gave a loud mew to attract Ernest's attention. He was so interested with his book that he contented himself by putting over his hand to caress the cat. A loud crash startled him; his arm had overturned the vase, it was broken in fragments. He sprang to his feet hastily, picked up a piece and looked at it for a moment, then burst into tears.

"O dear, what shall I do? It was mamma's, and she gave it to me; and papa will be vexed too."

The cat had dropped from the table, and stood on the chair looking from the broken vase to the distressed child.

Just then the door opened, and a boy I had never seen before came in. He had bright black eyes, and dark hair, inclined to curl; there was a reckless bold look about his face, and somehow I disliked him altogether, although he was very handsome. I could see that in disposition and love of mischief he nearly equalled Toph, and there was less excuse for him.

"What's the matter, Ernest?" he asked.

"I broke that vase by accident," said Ernest. "I am so sorry, for I know papa will be vexed, and—"

"Hold on!" exclaimed the boy, clutching Ernest's arm, and looking sly and clever. "What a muff you are, to be sure! Can't you say the cat did it? It's likely enough; there she is looking as if she did it too."

I trembled for Ernest, but I was relieved when he replied:

"That wouldn't be true, Harry; pussy didn't do it."

"What matter?" urged the tempter. "She can't tell, and it won't hurt her. If she didn't break

it, she has broken lots of other things, I dare say." Ernest shook his head.

"It mightn't matter for pussy, but it would for me; I should feel mean and cowardly if I told an untruth, and besides it would be a sin."



"It ain't a sin to tell a little fib like that. You're a fool, Ernest, and I'm no coward either; I could fight you, I bet;" and he closed his hands and threw himself into an attitude such as I have seen cowardly bullies assume when they wanted to look brave.

"I don't like fighting," said Ernest, picking up



the pieces of the vase, and vainly striving to fit them together. "And why should we fight? we are cousins, of course."

"O, yes, I knew you wouldn't fight, but you ought to learn; it is a nice thing to be able to knock a fellow down, I can tell you; make him turn up anything you take a fancy to."

"Do you mean anything of his?" asked Ernest, looking up with a very red face.

"Of course; what's the fun but that?"

"Then I think it's no better than being a thief, or a highwayman, making boys weaker than yourself give you what belongs to them," said Ernest indignantly.

What reply Harry might have made was cut short by the hasty entrance of Susan to announce the arrival of Ernest's papa and his aunt. Both boys left the room at once, but Ernest carried the pieces of the broken vase in his hand. I followed, curious to see my master, the poet, and feeling very unhappy, I could scarcely tell why, except that the air seemed thick and difficult for me to live in. It used to be pure and fresh; now the presence of sorrow perhaps had changed it.

And my master, too, he looked ten years older than when I saw him last in his study on that summer night. All the brightness had gone out

of his face, his dark hair was threaded with silver, and a look of settled melancholy seemed impressed upon his features. The lady with him looked older a great deal than he did. She appeared not only grave, but stern as well. She was tall and angular, and I could see that she thought herself a very amiable and proper person, and could make no excuse at all for faults in anyone. I felt as if a cold wind were blowing through the room as I looked at her. Of course she was too practical and common-sense to believe in fairies, or have fancies about anything at all.

"This is your Aunt Jane, Ernest," said the poet; "she is coming to live with us, and try to supply your dear mamma's place in our lonely house;" here his voice faltered. "I hope you will be, as you always have been, a good obedient boy."

"I will do my best, papa," he said promptly, as he came forward shyly to the lady, who reached out her hand to shake his in a cold fashion.

"What is that you have got there?" she asked rather sharply, as she sat down on a chair.

"It's a vase, papa," said Ernest, turning instinctively to his father. "I broke it by accident, and I am very sorry?"

"So am I, Ernest," said the poet; he had been

examining the fragments as his son spoke, "but you are a good boy to be honest about it."

"It must have been very costly," said Aunt Jane. "It is a shame for a boy to be so careless."

Ernest was about to reply hastily, for I saw his face flushed, but his papa spoke quietly:

"Ernest is not at all careless usually; quite the contrary; and I know he wouldn't do this above all things if he could avoid it."

Ernest looked gratefully at his father. "Put the pieces in my study, I'll see if it is not possible to put them together somehow."

Ernest left the room to do as he was desired, and Aunt Jane turned her attention to Harry. He had been too busy pursuing a blue-bottle fly on the window pane to take any particular notice of what was going on.

"And who is that nice boy?" asked the lady.

"That is Harry Thompson," said the poet, "you know, a cousin of Ernest's."

"O!" ejaculated the lady, "a son of your wife's brother. I hope he is not living here altogether."

"He is only on a visit for his midsummer holidays."

"Isn't there a little girl too?" she asked.

"Yes, my little daughter Ella, but you won't

have anything to do with her at present, the nurse is very kind and careful."

"I am glad of it, for you'll find few servants answer to that description nowadays. Is it killing flies you are?" she asked angrily of Harry.

He turned round promptly, and replied without a blush:

"No, I ain't."

"Yes, but you were; I saw you catch one just now, a blue-bottle."

"O, yes, they're bad; Cook likes them all killed; they do mischief in the larder," he replied promptly.

"Well, I know they do, yet she oughtn't to set you to kill them."

The poet smiled and left the room. Harry followed him, and Cook came in to hand over the keys to Miss Jane.

"Your father has sent a box of toys for you, Harry," said the poet, as he passed through the hall. "There is a train for you, a ball for Ernest, and a doll for Ella. You will see his letter in the box with the toys."

Harry hurried away to the nursery to examine the box, and his papa sent Ernest. There was a train and a drum for Harry himself, a book and a ball for Ernest, and a doll for Ella. I had not

seen her yet, and I was very anxious to find out if she was at all like Ernest, and to contrast her with her brother. Susan brought her into the nursery, and Harry made a great fuss about giving her the doll. She sat down in a corner by herself and began to examine it. Somehow she didn't seem so much pleased with the doll as Harry expected.

"Don't you like it, Ella?" he asked.

"Yes, like it," she replied, and I remarked that she scarcely lisped at all, but seemed to make her answers as short as possible.

"Then why don't you look pleased?" said Ernest, who was already deep in his new book.

"'Cause I's cross," said Ella pouting.

"And why?" asked Harry. She did not speak for a long time, then she jerked her doll up rudely by the arms, and looked in its face in a cross fashion as she said:

"Pinafores ain't made to eat, 'ittle girl."

Harry burst out laughing, and Ernest looked up from his book.

"What do you mean, Ella?" asked Harry when he had somewhat sobered down.

"Aunty Dane ain't dood," she said decidedly; "spoke't to Ella like dat."

"She's a cross old maid," said Harry; "I

shouldn't like her to order me about. What do you think, Ernest?" he asked.

"About what?" asked Ernest, looking up.

"About your new Aunt Jane, of course."

"Well, I don't quite know yet. She doesn't seem pleasant; but when we get used to her we may like her better."

"S'an't like her, hates her," said the little girl, shaking her head solemnly.

"O, Ella, you ought-n't to hate anybody, it isn't good," said Ernest reprovingly.



"People can't be like you," said Harry; "I don't think you could hate anything."

"Yes, I could," replied Ernest quickly, "I could hate telling untruth or being mean. Aunt Jane is a stranger here, and we oughtn't to talk about her, and—and she's papa's sister."

"We know all about that," sneered Harry; "I heard from my mother. She's an odd one. When your father married your mother she wouldn't speak to him, or know him at all, and now—"

"I know all about it too, Harry," said Ernest, closing his book. "That is quite true, but papa told me she went to see mamma at last, and stopped with her a week before—before—" here he paused, for his voice was choked with emotion. I could have cried for his sorrow. Ella dropped her doll on the carpet, and coming over she reached up her arms and drew down his face for a kiss.

"Before mamma died," he went on with an effort. "Aunt promised her to take care of us, and you must try to love her, Ella."

"S'an't love no one but papa, own mamma, and you, Ernest," she said, shaking her head, as usual with her.

"Then you must obey her; do what she tells you anyhow, Ella, if you want me to love you."

"Don't you love me, Ella?" asked Harry smiling, "I gave you that doll."

"Don't love peoples for divin' sings, but I feels nice to dem."

"O, you feel nice to me then," said Harry laughing. She nodded her head and left the room to find Nurse and exhibit her doll.

It took Aunt Jane quite a fortnight before she could get the house into Christian order, as she called it. She had vast changes made, and wonderful turnings up of concealed dust and

lumber. All this was to be done before she settled down to the task of looking sharply after the children, as she called it. She meant to begin by teaching Ella her letters, and the catechism by rote. Willie could read very well, and as his papa instructed him, she only intended to take charge of the religious part of his education. The servants shared Ella's dislike to the new mistress. She fussed about too much for the cook, and was too orderly and methodical in her habits for the younger servants. The atmosphere of the house for that first fortnight was most irritating to the poet, although he kept his own room except when he went out for a sharp walk or a ramble on the mountains. But at length the storm blew over; things were arranged just as Miss Jane liked, and a calm succeeded. Somehow no one thought of questioning or contradicting any order she gave, and even the cook shrank from offending her. In the first place all her plans were sensible and correct, and in the second she had got absolute authority from the master, and instant dismissal was to be the fate of any servant who displeased her; so she threatened, and they could see they had a very different person to deal with from their former gentle mistress. She had nerves of iron herself, she



expected others to have the same. She never got weary working; change of work was her rest, she used to say, and she expected every one to be like herself. In every respect as a manager and economist of time and money Miss Jane was admirable, and she honestly meant to do her best by her brother and his family, but she wanted one important quality—sympathy—for any one unlike herself. She was perfection, she expected perfection, she had been a model little child, never soiled her pinafores, never disobeyed her parents, always learned her lessons, and said her prayers. Of course poor Ella, being very different from all this, had no sympathy from Miss Jane, and instead of her aunt improving in her regard as time went on, Ella only got to dislike her more and more, and avoided her presence whenever she could.

Ernest was wiser and more thoughtful than many children twice his age; he did not judge his aunt by her hard outside, and as time passed he liked her a little better than at first, but he could not possibly feel any affection for her yet.

Harry's holidays were drawing to a close, and Miss Jane felt that his absence would be a relief, for he was constantly at the bottom of some mis-

chief, and there was no possibility of finding it out so clearly as to fix it upon him.

Ernest felt sorry at the prospect of losing his companionship. Although he did not like Harry's character, yet good boys will even take a companion they do not quite like, rather than have none.

This morning Ernest was with his papa in the study, repeating a lesson, while Harry amused himself as best he might in the nursery, waiting till Ernest would be ready to go out with him for a ramble. I watched him for a while; he



was a curiosity to me. I could understand Toph being fond of mischief, in fact putting evil for his good; but a boy with a soul, who knew good from evil, to choose the evil, and only think it good fun, I could not understand. He looked very quiet and amiable as he drew his toy train across the carpet in the nursery; but I could read his thoughts, and he was planning a story just then to induce Ernest to accompany him into a meadow he wished very much to cross, because

at its further side he had found a bank full of wild strawberries. A labourer seeing him in it one day had ordered him out, but he had determined to try again, and if any one caught them his cousin would be as bad as himself; besides, he did not care to go alone. When he had made up his mind to manage anything Harry generally saw it out. This would have been a very good quality if he had been bent upon doing good.

I have noticed that precisely the same qualities of mind lead to good and to evil, just as the persons possessing them use them; but why some should turn to good and some to evil I cannot understand, because good is so much pleasanter afterwards and evil-doing always ends in sorrow and trouble.

Harry picked up his whip from the floor, and strolled out of the room; he knew that Ernest would soon finish his lesson. As he passed the dining-room door he paused, for he heard Miss Jane's voice speaking in a very sharp tone. He opened the door, and saw Ella standing before the lady, book in hand. He seated himself in a window recess; the child had not noticed him, and Miss Jane heeded him no more than she would a fly. She was too busy and anxious just then with the little rebel before her.

"Go on, Ella, I'm listening to you," she said, while she knitted away vigorously. There was something commanding in the very click of the needles.

"S—O—lo," said Ella in a sing-song tone, as if she felt very weary.

"Have you no ear at all, child? S—O, I have told you, spells so, and L—O, lo."

Ella did not seem to hear or to heed, she went on calling so—lo most provokingly, and sometimes she would call go—so.

"You cannot be so stupid," said Miss Jane putting down her knitting on her lap, "it must be bad temper or sulks." She forgot that Ella was learning her letters as well as putting them together. "If you think to escape you are mistaken, for you shall stand there all day, till you do those four words properly."

Ella began to cry quietly.

"One would require the patience of Job to manage you," said Miss Jane. "How long do you mean to cry for nothing?"

She thought it was nothing to stand there all day spelling stupid words, while the sun shone outside, and the little birds sang sweetly among the trees.

"Look at your brother." Ella looked round

instantly. "How he does his lessons!" continued Miss Jane after smiling contemptuously at the child's mistake. "I want to do out, p'ease," said Ella meekly.

"I have told you that you sha'n't leave this room till you spell those four words." And her aunt took up her knitting, closed her lips firmly, and went on with her work as if she could sit contentedly till the following morning, if necessary. The child stole a look at her, there was no relenting in the face, nothing that tears or entreaties could move, and she once more began to labour over the four, to her hateful words, but with very little better success. Harry had quite enough of Miss Jane's presence; and glad that he was not in her power like Ella, he opened the door and left the room. In the hall he met Ernest.

"I've been waiting for you," he exclaimed. "Let us have a ramble."

"I wonder if Ella has left aunt; she went in as I went to papa," said Ernest, pausing before the door.

"She'll never finish, come on," said Harry impatiently.

"But Ernest was too kind a brother to go out and enjoy himself while poor little Ella was enduring what he knew she looked upon as torment.

"I shall be with you in a minute or two, Harry," he said, as he opened the door and walked into the room. Here he found Ella as Harry had found her, standing before Aunt Jane, only the lady was looking more determined than ever, and her needles were going at double speed. Ernest knew what these signs meant.

"Not finished yet, Ella?" he said cheerfully; "why, you ought to work harder."

"She won't try," said Miss Jane. "She is obstinate and sullen. I never knew a child like her—never."

That was quite probable, for she had never tried to teach any child before.

"Why, how much have you got to learn? let me see." Ella pointed out the four words very readily; she had great faith in Ernest's power of making rough places smooth.

He talked to her very prettily, as Aunt Jane said afterwards, asking her if she would like to *go* into the woods, or *go* in a coach, or *go* in a boat.

"You could not lo in a boat, could you?" he asked.

She smiled as she replied readily:

"No, go in boat." Then he got her to understand how the other little words fitted in, and all

difficulty was at an end. The four words were repeated to Miss Jane, but Ella kept her eyes fixed on Ernest's face while she said them—had she looked at her aunt she would have made her former mistakes over again—and the lady was quite pleased to get over the difficulty, so that Ella left the room with Ernest in triumph.

"I thought you would never come," said Harry. "Why have you not got to stand all day over those silly little words?" he asked of Ella.

She did not deign to reply, but ran away into the garden, where Susan noticed her, and carried out her sun-bonnet.

"Now, come along," said Harry; and the boys walked down the long avenue in front of the house, and out upon the narrow country road.

"See here, Ernest," Harry said when they had got away a good distance from the house. "You know that meadow I wanted you to come into last week."

"Yes, I know."

"And you wouldn't come, because you said the farmer your father used to know, who lived there, had gone back to England again. He didn't like these hills, and there were strangers at the farm now, and you wouldn't take any liberty."

"Yes, you have a good memory, Harry."

"Well, I have got liberty from the old fellow."

"The farmer himself?"

"Yes, and we can go into the field and pick as many strawberries as we like."

Ernest knew that Harry was not in the habit of telling the truth, and he felt that he should not take his word on the subject; but then his cousin was to leave in two days, and he did not care to vex him by refusing, and above all Ernest would like very much to go into the meadow himself, and alone he would not attempt it. So he said nothing, but walked along beside Harry till they came to the field. The gate was closed and locked. This ought to have been a warning to Ernest, but when Harry climbed over the fence he followed him without question, only his conscience whispered all the time that he was doing wrong; and yet he thought, even should their new neighbour object, it was not a great thing after all. They crossed the meadow, and reached the further end where the strawberries grew. They were very fine and ripe, so fine that Ernest regretted they could not have Ella with them; but he took care to gather a lot, and put them on some grass in the crown of his hat. This was suggested by Harry. Then instead of returning by the way they came, he also proposed



that they should climb a fence into another field, cross it, and go out on the common, from which only a wooden fence divided it.

Ernest could see no objection to this, and they climbed over easily, and crossed the wide meadow, Ernest carefully carrying his hat full of strawberries.

"Look, look!" exclaimed Harry, when they had got half across. "That's a nice horse tied to the fence, I should like a ride upon him, should you?"

"I wouldn't care much," replied Ernest.

But Harry ran on before, and soon mounted the fence and sat upon the animal's back. The horse didn't seem to mind him at all, but went on nipping the tops off the grass, as if no little boy were on his back.

"How nice it is, Ernest!" he said as the boy came up. "I wish you would untie the bridle and give it to me, I think I could ride him along a little way."

At first Ernest refused, but Harry over-persuaded him, and he untied the knot and put the halter in Harry's hand. The horse behaved very well, for instead of running away, when it got its liberty, it only moved along quietly, and stooped its head to eat a piece of fresh grass, now and then. Harry at length brought it to a stop,

and managed to turn it round and bring it back to the point from whence they started.

"Now, could you do that?" asked Harry proudly.

Ernest had ridden a pony before now, and he said so.

"Well, just try and ride this quiet old fellow, as far as I did."

Something again whispered to Ernest that he oughtn't to ride a stranger's horse without permission, but Harry's jeering:

"You ain't afraid, are you?" decided him; and putting down his hat full of strawberries, he climbed on the fence, and seated himself on the horse's back, grasping the halter which Harry put into his hand.

"Now, if you ain't afraid, you had best go a little faster," and he gave the horse a cut across the flanks with his whip, which he had carried all the way from home. The animal made a sudden plunge, causing Ernest to lose his hold on the halter, then he galloped off at full speed.

It was not the cut with the whip alone that sent him off, for just then a black bird swooped low before the animal's eyes. Could it be our old friend, Toph the raven?

I had no time to decide, for I was in agony at

Ernest's danger. On the horse flew over the open common, and to my terror I saw that he took the way to the lake. The land sloped down to the water edge, so that naturally the horse went down. A glance back showed me Harry picking up the hat, and walking along the com-



mon eating the strawberries at his leisure. At first he felt frightened, but as he was in no danger he took it comfortably and turned towards home, trusting that he might escape blame, if anything happened to Ernest; but he had little fear of this, for he thought some one would stop the horse before it went far.



## CHAPTER VII.

### HOW MISS JANE DEALS WITH HARRY.

**I**T was a good thing for Ernest that he had learnt to ride a little, for after the first natural alarm he got firmer in his seat, and regained his courage. The horse, too, after his panic was over, settled in his mind where he should go to, and he galloped along with an easy swing till he reached the road which led to the nearest town. About two miles off his owner lived, and he would go home. He had been ridden over by a servant from his master with a message to the farmer, and he had tied the horse to the fence while he crossed the fields to the house, never dreaming that any one would meddle with it.

Meantime Harry had reached home, and he managed to keep out of the way till tea-time. He had hoped Ernest would arrive before that time, but when the bell rang he went inside without him.

Ella was in her usual seat beside her papa, Miss Jane at the head of the table, and he took his place feeling a little uncomfortable.

"Where is Ernest?" asked his papa of Harry. The boy hesitated, then spoke.

"We went out for a walk together," he replied, "but he left me; I thought he would be home before now."

"Did you have a quarrel?" asked Aunt Jane sharply.

"No, we did not," replied Harry.

"And why did he leave you?" asked the poet.

"I don't know."

"You don't know! that is a strange story," said Miss Jane, as she poured out the tea.

"Ernest is sure to be home presently," said his papa; "no doubt he had a book in his pocket, and is walking slowly and reading; I have noticed him do that often."

"I don't approve of children being absent at meal-time; it is very irregular and careless."

"Ernest ain't rereg'lar," said Ella, looking up with a piece of bread and honey in her hand.

"Irregular, you mean, Ella," said papa smiling.

"Ain't naughty, knows dat," she said, nodding her head. Harry was too much frightened to meet Aunt Jane's eye, and he felt it fixed upon

him all that tea-time, so as soon as possible he got done and left the room. But Miss Jane was not going to let him off so easily. Susan came running out to the garden when he had been there for half an hour.

"Master Harry, you're wanted."

"Who wants me?" he asked.

"Miss Jane; you'd best go quickly too."

He thought of refusing at first, then he feared that might rouse suspicion, and he was becoming uneasy about Ernest. What if he had been thrown from the horse and killed? Yet he would say he knew nothing about it, he would keep to that. These thoughts passed through his mind as he went into the parlour and saw Miss Jane sitting near the fire. She was rather of a chilly nature, and in the evenings she required warmth.

"Sit down here," she said, indicating a chair in front of her. Harry obeyed.

"You have been taught that to tell an untruth is a sin," she began. "I hope you will now tell me exactly why Ernest did not come with you."

"I told you before; he went away, and I came home. I thought he would be home before me." He spoke confidently, clasping his knee in his hand, and looking up in her face as if he were

telling the simple truth. Miss Jane closed her thin lips tightly, and looked unbelieving.

"I may tell you I don't believe you," she said decidedly. "I know Ernest to be a good boy; he has always been punctual at meal-times, because



I told him I liked that. I thought you would tell me the truth now." She paused, but Harry only shook his head.

"I can't say anything but what I have said, unless I make a story."

"Very well, we shall see. I know you went out with Ernest, I saw you together."

"O, Miss Jane!" exclaimed Susan, bursting into the room in haste, "I declare if that Toph ain't back again in the nursery, a-sittin' on the window-sill, just as he used to be long ago."

"Toph, who is Toph?" asked the lady rising, while Harry hurried to the nursery to see what Susan meant.

She explained to Miss Jane all about it, and wound up by giving it as her opinion that the bird was unlucky, nothing less than an evil spirit.

"Absurd!" pronounced the practical lady; "an evil spirit, indeed! I am surprised that you can be so ignorant and superstitious." Whatever form this bird assumed, Miss Jane determined to encourage it, just to show that she was not either one or other. As she followed Susan to the nursery the poet passed them on his way out.

"I am getting uneasy about Ernest," he said; "I must walk over the common, and meet him if he is coming this way."

"I think it's Toph, sir, that's come back again," said Susan.

"Where is he?"

"In the nursery, it seems," replied Miss Jane.

He looked in and saw the bird sitting solemn and sedate as of old on the window-sill, Harry



looking at it, and Ella pleased but half afraid of it.

"Toph, Toph," he called, and the bird flew in slowly and lit on the table beside him.

"It is Toph," he pronounced; "let no one hurt or annoy him; his enemy, Farmer Jones, is gone."

"Ernest told me something about him," said Aunt Jane, approaching Toph caressingly, while the poet turned away and walked rapidly through the hall door, taking the direction of the common.

We left Ernest riding along on the way to the nearest village. For quite two miles he met no one, then a little girl crossing the common saw him, and noticing the bridle hanging down she called to two schoolboys who were returning from the village school to stop the horse. They ran and shouted, but only with the effect of starting the animal off at a quicker pace. These schoolboys happened to be the sons of the Scotch farmer who had settled down on the farm where Toph's enemy used to live, and they believed they knew the little boy on the horse as a neighbour, but they were not quite certain.

Still the horse galloped on, and Ernest, although not so much afraid as when he started, yet wondered when the animal meant to stop. He

had read the poem of John Gilpin, as what school-boy has not, and it occurred to him forcibly that he was very like a picture of John, clasping the horse round the neck and flying along. By



degrees the horse began to slacken his pace till they came opposite an avenue. Here he turned up at an easy trot, and cantered on till he came to a full stop opposite the front door of a pretty straggling country house with an ivy-covered gable and rose-covered porch. As he dismounted he noticed a lady sitting away back in the parlour pointing a little girl to the open window.

"Run out," she was saying, "and ask the little boy to come in."

But the child was too late; her sister had noticed their old gray horse canter up with a strange little boy on his back without any hat, and she was now standing beside him.

"Where did you come from, little boy," she asked, "and how did you get our pony?"



"Is it your pony?" asked Ernest.

"Of course it is," she replied impatiently, "but how did you get him?"

Had it been Harry he would have at once invented a story, but Ernest never thought of that; he told the truth plainly, and by this time the lady inside and the little girl had come out to look at him.

"It is most surprising," said the lady, "that you could come safely all that way. What is your name?" she asked.

"Ernest Macleod," he replied, "and I am afraid papa and aunt will be frightened at me not going home for tea." The lady thought for a moment, she knew the name.

"Your papa is a poet, is he not?" she asked.

Ernest replied in the affirmative.

"If you come in and sit down Amelia will get you some tea, and we shall send you home safely. Why, you look quite pale and tired, you must have been frightened."

"I was frightened at first," said Ernest. He felt as if he could cry, the lady spoke so kindly to him when he expected she would be angry at him for riding on her horse.

"Run round to the kitchen and send Peter," said the lady to Amelia, "then come and get some tea for Ernest." As she spoke she took the little boy's hand and led him into the pretty parlour, and the other little girl brought him a low chair. He thanked her and sat down. He noticed that she was older than Ella, but not so old-fashioned looking in the face. Meantime the lady gave the servant boy directions to ride the horse back again, and tell Mr. Macleod that his boy was safe, and would be home during the evening.

"If you please," said Ernest, rising after he

had rested for a few minutes, "I would rather go back home if you will permit me."

"Are you not hungry?" asked the lady smiling, "I always thought hard riding gave one an appetite." Ernest's face flushed as he replied candidly:

"I am a little hungry, but I ought to be at home."

"You are a good truthful boy," she said approvingly, "and I have sent Peter to tell your papa that you are safe, so you may rest contentedly." Ernest thanked her. He felt grateful, for he was tired after his exciting ride.

"Will you please come with me for tea?" said Amelia, walking in through the French window. "I have it in the arbour at the foot of the garden," she said to her mamma.

Ernest thought he had never seen such a wise womanly looking little girl. She wore her dress longer than usual, and he noticed as she walked before him that she had a slight halt. That was the secret of her wise looks; she had suffered.

They soon reached the arbour, and Amelia poured out the tea, trying to look grave and motherly. After tea was over she had a long chat with Ernest, and he confided to her all about his trouble in losing his mamma, and told her of his sister Ella, and how much he wished

she might know her. In fact they became quite good friends, for Amelia believed in fairies, and felt my presence with Ernest.

After tea she took him to a little room she called her own; it opened off a conservatory filled with choice flowers, and she took down a violin



and played some soft sweet airs upon it, till Ernest's eyes actually filled with tears.

"You play beautifully," he said.

"I have practised a great deal," she replied. "I have been ill for years, and that has been my companion; I love it. Should you like to play? You seem as if you loved music."

"So I do," replied Ernest, "but I have never heard music like that. Why, it is like the sighing of the wind sometimes, and again like falling water."

"You are a true musician," she said earnestly, "when you can hear the music in such sounds; few can."

"On your favourite theme again, Amelia," said her mamma, coming in. "I am sorry to say it is time for Ernest to go home, that is if you mean to accompany him." Amelia looked questioningly at her mamma.

"Yes, we were thinking you could go along in your boat and harness Fanny to it. Ernest lives on the shores of the lake at the wide part, he could tell you when you came opposite his house, and the man is going over again to pay for some hay at the farm, and he will come back with you."

"O, how nice!" cried Amelia, and she ran off to get on her hat. Mrs. Campbell—that was the lady's name—provided a hat for Ernest to wear on his return, and she desired him to remember her to his papa, as they had been friends when they were children many years ago. Ernest promised very readily, and Mrs. Campbell and the other little girl, who was called Ada, accompanied him down by a meadow path, and across the road to the edge of the water where a nice boat lay, and Peter the boy was harnessing a goat to it. Ernest expressed his surprise and admiration

at the plan. Then Amelia joined them, and seated herself in the boat at the tiller, while Peter gave Ernest a long whip, just to touch up Fanny now and again. Mrs. Campbell kissed Ernest and hoped he would visit them often, and Ada kissed him, then he too got into the boat, and Fanny started off quite pleasantly. Ernest watched the



lady standing on the bank, till a bend in the lake hid her from his sight. Then he touched up the goat a little, and began to talk with Amelia.

It is curious how a little incident may influence the whole course of a human life. This runaway horse affected all Ernest's future in a strange fashion.

As they glided along, the talk turned upon Amelia's favourite study, music, and she hinted that if her mamma permitted, and his papa had no objection, she would be glad to teach Ernest



what she knew, or he might take lessons from the blind violin player who came over from the village twice a week to teach her. The very thought of this filled the boy's heart with delight, and he determined to ask his papa's permission at once.

It was quite twilight when they came opposite the meadow and the grove of trees, beyond which the gables and chimneys of the poet's house could be seen; and standing on the bank, Ernest first saw his papa, and beyond him, the figure of a man looking gigantic in the fading light. This was the servant waiting to return with Amelia. Ernest knew then how dearly he was loved by his father, when he felt the warm clasp of his hand, and saw the bright look in his face as he said:

"Safe and sound, my boy, after all." Then he knew his papa had heard all about it, and he should not have to tell anything.

"And so you are the eldest daughter of my old friend," he said to Amelia. "Do you know, my dear, that when I was a boy like Ernest we used to be playmates, your mamma and I." Amelia looked at him shyly.

"And you are a great poet, sir, I have read one of your books," she said.

"Why, you are only a child; could you care for them?" he asked curiously.

"I am eleven years old," she said with her own quiet dignity.

"She's been delicate, sir, nearly all her life," said the man; "an' she's always been readin' an' thinkin'."

"Ah! yes, that's it," said the poet. "I hope you will be friends with Ernest. Tell your mamma that I am glad to know she is such a close neighbour; we must see each other frequently."

Then Ernest said good-bye to Amelia, and the man took the whip and turned the goat back by the way they came. Ernest and his papa stood on the bank watching the boat as long as it could be seen in the fading light, and Amelia waved her hand as a good-bye, and they walked up to the house and straight into the parlour, where Miss Jane sat knitting very rapidly.

She showed the nearest approach to pleasure Ernest had yet seen on her face, as he came in at the door.

"I am pleased you are safe," she said; then checking herself, she put on her usual manner. "But you ought not to have mounted a strange animal. I had no idea you could be so thoughtless."

Ernest went over without noticing her altered manner, and kissed her withered cheek.

"Yes, I was thoughtless, Aunt, but I won't do such a thing again," he said.

There was no word of blame for another, no saying Harry led me to do it; Ernest was too brave for that.

Miss Jane looked at her brother meaningly, as she set a basin of bread and milk (it was cream that night) on the table before Ernest, and ordered him to sit down and eat that before he said a word more.

"A nice trouble I have had to keep it warm for you," she said sharply to cover her pleasure. Ernest knew the sharpness was only put on, although most children would not have known it.

"I think it is best allow it to pass; he is going away soon." This was said in a low tone by the poet as he turned to leave the room.

"Let it pass indeed!" said Miss Jane indignantly. "It is only a matter of justice and truth, it would be a sin on my soul if I allowed it to pass for the sake of saving myself a little unpleasantness. I have observed with pain that your principles are lax, your—"

"Oh, pray, do what you like," exclaimed the poet, opening the door and retreating quickly

"Anything to save myself a lecture," he said half aloud as he ascended to his own study. "But I believe to punish a culprit is a pleasure to my amiable sister, no matter what she makes herself believe. Justice and no mercy is her motto."

Miss Jane's indignation was at its fiercest as she sat knitting, while Ernest eat his bread and milk, all unconscious of the storm brewing so near him. It was very little wonder that the good lady felt so, when I found that the man who had been sent to the farm was crossing the field just as Harry gave the horse a cut with his whip and sent it off. He had followed as quickly as possible, and on the way he had met the boy his mistress had sent to tell the poet that his son was safe. He accompanied him, saw Miss Jane, and told her all he had seen, and how he was surprised that the young gentleman wasn't killed; and how that other young gentleman was a born mischief. In the latter opinion Miss Jane quite agreed; and when the man left, she sent to the garden for Harry, and without saying one word to him about what she heard, she ordered him into the nursery. The grim look on her face frightened him, and he obeyed at once. Then she turned the key in the door, and told him he

might stop there with his conscience for company till she let him out.

Meantime Ella had been put to bed, and although she stated that she would not sleep till Ernest came home, she soon forgot, and slept as usual. I could see that, for while he was engaged with his bread and milk I slipped away to visit Harry, curious to find how he bore his imprisonment; and I peeped into Ella's room in passing.

It was almost dark in the nursery, and although there were candles, Harry could find no matches. Evidently he had tired himself out in hunting for something to amuse him, and it was too dark to read now. The window stood open, and he sat with his elbows on the table staring straight out at the mountain. As I said before, the nursery was at the back of the house, so that he had not heard Ernest come in. Harry was a coward, and full of superstitious fears. He thought as he gazed that the shadows of the trees looked like so many giants, and he felt as if he could scream out. While he was in this state a rustling sound was audible at the window. He started up and crouched down in the farthest corner of the room, covering his face with his hands; then he heard the name Ernest pronounced

distinctly, followed by an ominous croak. He could bear no more, but with a shriek of terror he rushed towards the door and flung himself against it, as a black object flew into the room and settled on the table.

"What is all this noise about?" asked Miss Jane as she opened the door candle in hand.

"It's a—it's a ghost," replied Harry as he fled out into the passage. But Miss Jane was too quick for him. She grasped him by the arm, and turned him round.

"Ghost, indeed! look there, it is only the raven." And she held up the candle, so that the light fell upon Toph seated on the table.

"But I heard a voice," said Harry humbly.

"A voice! I shouldn't wonder at all if your conscience spoke to you; what did you do with Ernest? answer me," she said, shaking him by the arm.

"I—I; he isn't killed, is he?"

"That's not owing to your care of him," she replied angrily. And still holding his arm, Miss Jane marched him along to the parlour, where Ernest was sitting at the table, with his basin pushed to one side and a book before him.

On seeing him Harry hung his head, while Miss Jane closed the door, and told him how she

knew all from the servant-man, and that she suspected as much before, and now he was to be sent home in the morning; and she would write a letter to his father and say he was never, never to visit Mountain House again. The last punishment was hardest to bear, and Harry burst into tears. Ernest pleaded with his aunt to forgive Harry for this time; he was certain he never thought, when he struck the horse with the whip. But Miss Jane would not hear a word. Any boy that could deny what he had done, and look so innocent too all the while, must be bad at heart, and quite fit for any crime, murder not excepted; that he struck the horse, and sent him off, so that Ernest might be thrown and killed, she believed firmly.

This was going too far. Harry had intended to have a little fun out of Ernest, but he had no idea the horse would run off in such a fashion; in fact he did not trouble himself to think much about the matter at all.

I have noticed that selfish children are always thoughtless of others, and in this way they manage to work as much evil to those around them as the wilfully vicious do.

Early the following morning Miss Jane, with her usual promptitude, had Harry's clothes packed

up, and accompanied him to the town, where the train would take him home.

"I'm not going to have a boy like that in the house for an hour longer than I can help," she said to her brother at breakfast.

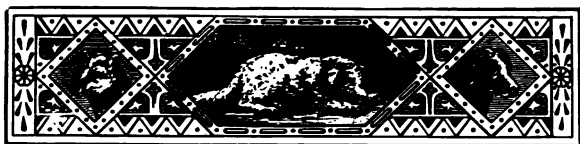
I know that not a soul in the house said good-day to Master Harry with any feeling but one of satisfaction.

He was sorry to go away from his freedom, and begin school work again. Above all, it punished him sorely that he should never return to the hospitable house where he had spent so many happy days.

I did not accompany him, for I felt quite relieved when he went away; but on her return I heard Miss Jane tell her brother what she said to him at parting.

"Remember, my boy, that deceit is always sure to be found out and punished in this world, as well as in the next."





## CHAPTER VIII.

### HOW ELLA RAN AWAY.

**S**O Miss Jane got rid of Harry, to her great satisfaction, and the course of daily life ran quietly for a time at Mountain House. Toph became a pretty regular visitor, and his sober looks and modesty of demeanour won for him at least toleration from the servants, and the kind regards of Miss Jane; in fact she petted him.

Although Mrs. Campbell's family lived two miles distant, yet Ernest was permitted to visit them regularly, and his papa had no objection to his cultivating the love for music he had so rapidly developed. Once or twice Amelia visited Mountain House, and although Miss Jane liked the little girl she would not accede to her request that Ella should accompany her brother sometimes when he came to see them.

"No, no," she replied firmly, "in my young

days little girls and boys of her age were kept at home till they learned how to conduct themselves in company. Ella is not at all well mannered for her age, indeed she is rather wild. She cannot be trusted from home yet."

At first Ella did not much mind Ernest going away to visit his new friends; but after she had seen Amelia and heard of Ada she wanted to go very much, and resented her aunt's authority in a manner which Ernest was shocked at. He spoke to her, but Ella only sulked all the more, and she was in the sulks for two days at least.

Matters came to a climax when one evening Amelia came over in her boat to invite Ernest and Ella to spend the following day. They were going down the lake, and intended having a picnic on the common. Miss Jane heard that several friends were to be there, and as usual she refused to allow Ella to go. She would be better fit to take care of herself next year.

"Could she not go just for this once?" asked Ernest.

"If there were any grown-up people going, Ernest, she might, but as you are all only children, and just able to take care of yourselves, I could not think of trusting Ella; but she needn't know anything about it."

Of course Amelia promised not to tell her; but the following morning, when Ella met Ernest walking through the hall dressed in his best clothes, she guessed what it meant, and after he had gone Susan told her all about it.

That morning Ella was particularly tiresome to Aunt Jane. She blotted her copy-book, and would not do her sums right. In fact she seemed to forget that one and one made two. Learning to spell a few words seemed a task far beyond her powers, and at length Aunt Jane suggested that she should carry her book out to the garden and learn her lesson there. Ella consented to this readily, but once among the flowers she forgot all about the troublesome spelling, and she amused herself by chasing a butterfly till her aunt's voice recalled her to a sense of her duty. Of course she had not learnt one word, and her aunt took her inside the house and up to her own room where she locked her in.

I was curious to see how she would act, so I followed her. She didn't cry, but when her aunt was gone she put down her book on the dressing-table and began to look out of the window. I could see she was very cross and sulky, and had made up her mind not to learn a word. Aunt Jane came up to her in about twenty minutes,

took her book, and asked her to spell the first word; but Ella did not know it.

"You have not tried to learn, Ella; you know it is very naughty of you," said the good lady. "Perhaps if I put you in the empty room you will have nothing to take your attention off;" and she led the little child down-stairs and shut her in an empty room at the back of the house, but she did not lock her in this time. Ella made no answer.

"Now I shall return in twenty minutes; surely you can learn five words in that time if you try;" and again Miss Jane went away.

I saw that a naughty temper had quite taken possession of Ella. She could have easily learnt the words, but when she looked out of the window at the bright sunshine, and saw the little birds flitting through the trees, her heart grew harder, and she resolved not to learn one single word for her aunt, because she had prevented her from accompanying Ernest. She put down her book upon the window-sill, and buried her face in her hands. I thought how much happier the child would have felt in doing right instead of wrong, for I saw she did not seem at all satisfied with herself.

Presently she heard a footstep approaching the

door, and she turned from the window and stood pouting near the middle of the room. There was a very fretful look upon her face as she put her finger in her mouth. If she had had a kind mamma, who would have kissed her and



coaxed her, or had even a kind word been spoken to her, the hard little heart would have softened and the stubborn will given way. Toph had been sitting on his usual tree opposite this window, for it was the room below the nursery. He watched Ella as she stood

with her head on her hands, and when she turned away he flew down, and picking up the book from the window-sill he carried it off in his strong beak. The door opened and Miss Jane looked in.

“Well, Ella?—why, is it possible you are standing there without your book? But I suppose you know your lesson;” and the lady walked in.

Ella did not speak a word.

"Get your book instantly," ordered Miss Jane.

The child turned slowly to the window, but to her amazement she found it was gone.

"It has gone away, Aunty," she said simply.

"Gone away!" ejaculated Miss Jane, coming over to the window, her patience nearly exhausted.

"You naughty child, you have thrown it out of the window."

"Ain't naughty; ain't thrown it out," screamed Ella, stamping her little foot with anger.

"You have told me an untruth," said Miss Jane severely, "and you must be punished."

Then she ran out through the hall, and hunted about upon the grass for the book, but no book was to be found. The good lady was completely at her wits' end. That the child had made away with the book somehow she had no doubt at all, so ringing the bell for Susan she desired her to give Ella her dinner in the nursery, and to see that she should not get out all the afternoon, as she had not only refused to learn her lesson, but had destroyed or hidden her book. Susan had no doubt that Ella was guilty, for she knew how the child hated learning with her aunt.

So all that bright afternoon little Ella was kept a prisoner, her only solace leaning her

elbows on the window-sill and staring out into the garden. Toph sat up in his old tree blinking down at her. He knew there was something amiss when she stood there instead of running about in the garden, but what it was of course he could not understand. Cook brought up some bread and milk for Ella's supper, and Susan, anxious to get the child out of her way, hurried her to bed.

Now most people would say Ella was very naughty, and I say so too; but her punishment was far greater than it should have been, and Miss Jane believed she had made away with her book, and would not credit her word. She went to bed in a half stupid fashion, feeling a kind of dull misery, and a great hungering for one kind look or word.

"There, now, go to sleep fast. I'm sure you've been naughty enough for one day," said Susan as she left the room.

"Want Ernest," she said as the girl was going out; but no attention was paid to this appeal. It suddenly occurred to Ella that she had forgotten to say her prayers, so she slipped out of bed and repeated something I did not understand, because she only repeated the words without thinking of them. Somehow she felt the better for it, and

presently she fell asleep. I had not left the room when Ernest entered and approached the bed on tiptoe.

"Poor little Ella," he said as he kissed her gently, "Aunt says you have been naughty; I wish I had stopped at home with you."

Ella slept on, only turning her head uneasily and moaning slightly; then Ernest left as quietly as he had entered. I followed him down to the parlour, and heard him tell Aunt Jane all about the day's outing, and about the progress he had made on the violin.

"I can't think why your father should permit you to be a fiddler, Ernest," she said. "In our country fiddlers and poets were thought poor bodies, harmless enough, but not with all their wits about them like other folks." Ernest's face flushed.

"Papa is a poet, Aunty."

"Well, yes, it seems as if people like his poetry now, and it pays him; but, dear me, when his father first found him out he was nearly wild, and I thought no good could come of it either."

"But you see good has come of it, Aunty."

"Ah! well, perhaps so, but I don't approve of people making money by new ways and near cuts, and as to you making a living as a fiddler,



why, that is absurd. Dear me, I remember the blind fiddler who used to go about when I was a girl; he did play beautifully, and there was some excuse for him too, he couldn't work."

"But I might be a composer one day, Aunty. When I am alone I can imagine all sorts of beautiful sounds floating about, and they weave themselves into a measure in my mind, and then I can play them." Miss Jane shook her head solemnly.

"I don't like it, Ernest, it is folly and nonsense; I wish you could be sensible, and take to something definite and solid." Ernest smiled as he replied:

"I cannot help fancying, Aunty, no more than I can help breathing;" and I knew he spoke the truth.

"Then, my poor boy, I am afraid your brain is a little gone, or if it isn't it will be in time."

"I hope not, Aunty," he replied; then he said good-night and went up quietly to his own room.

On the following morning Miss Jane had a thorough search for Ella's book, but of course it was not to be found, and the child persisted in denying any knowledge of its whereabouts. Even Ernest had his doubts as to her truth, knowing that there was only one book in the

house suitable for her, and another would have to be written for to London before she could begin again. No one thought of blaming Toph, for no trick could be laid to his charge since his return, and Miss Jane had no personal experience of his former cleverness.

"I'm afraid I must only shut Ella up till the book is found," said her aunt after breakfast. The threat was intended to frighten the child into telling where the book was hidden.

Ernest went into his papa's study as usual, and Miss Jane pretended to take no notice when she saw Ella glance towards her slyly as she slipped out of the breakfast room. She took her sun-bonnet from the hall table and walked out into the garden.

"I suppose she's gone to find the book," thought her aunt as she went out of the room about some business.

But Miss Jane was very much mistaken indeed; I knew Ella had made up her mind to run away. She couldn't bear it any longer; even Ernest thought she had hidden the book, and papa had looked reprovingly at her.

In a very short time she left the garden and ran down the avenue and out by the front gate. Once on the road she ran very fast for fear some

one might follow her and bring her back. She soon reached a stile where she had been before with Susan, and she passed through and into the meadow-path. A sharp walk brought her across this, and then she came out on the common. A sweet breeze was blowing from the mountains, bearing with it the scent of gorse and heather, mingled with the fragrance of new-mown hay. Something seemed urging her on further and further, till, quite weary and exhausted, she reached the outskirts of the plantation where Fanny had rested three years before.

It was about mid-day, and Ella felt both tired and hungry. So once under the shelter of the trees, she sat down on a trunk she found convenient, and resting her chin on her hands she fell asleep. She believed herself now perfectly safe from pursuit, and almost at the end of the world. A whole army of wasps, fancying that her bonnet would make a good nest, advanced in single file to take possession, but a gentle little sound, somewhat louder than ordinary breathing, warned them off, and Ella's bonnet was saved from being turned into a wasp's nest. A rabbit scampering past, stopped to stare at her, and shortly afterwards she opened her eyes and started to her feet.

The short sleep had refreshed her, and she hurried on through the grove of trees and out upon the open common. She saw the sheep with delight, they were companions for her. Still further on a countryman met her.



"Lost your way, little un?" he said kindly; "b'longs to the Sunday-school treat, I'll be bound. Well, just ahint the hill you'll meet a lot of your playmates," and he pointed in the direction.

Ella had put her finger in her mouth when he began to speak to her; but when she found he

was not going to carry her back home she regained her courage and thanked him prettily, running off in the direction he indicated, because it was still further from home. The new world she had discovered was a very pleasant one,



she thought, if only she could find something to eat; it must be almost dinner time. As Ella passed through a clump of trees she noticed a group of children below her, and they soon noticed her, for one of the elder girls ran to meet her, picked her up in her arms, and carried her down to the others. I heard one of the little girls remark to another as she saw the girl carry Ella towards them.

"She's one of the infants, I suppose she has strayed away."

Presently Ella was set down on her feet beside these two, and they began to ask her questions.

"Do you live in any of the farms about here?" asked one of the girls. Ella shook her head.

"I am sure she has come with the infants. There is a whole van full of them."

Come with the infants! The words roused Ella's attention, and she remembered that Susan told her infants came down from heaven in a basket. Of course she had come with the infants, there was no doubt at all of that in her mind.

"How did you come here, pretty little darling?" asked the little girl with the Scotch cap.

"Comed wif the infants," replied Ella promptly. "Wants to go back wif them."

"Why, they are gone half an hour ago," said the elder girl who had picked Ella up. "It is a long drive, and they'll be late enough. I suppose she can come with us." This was said to the girl with the Scotch cap.

"O, yes, of course; there's plenty of room in the van for the little dear."

"Wants somefing to eat," said Ella.

"Of course. I suppose you went away before

the infants had luncheon?" Again Ella nodded her head; she could not remember that time at all, but this girl seemed to know all about it. Then the big girl took her up in her arms once more, and they all walked very fast till they came to a great tree, with more children gathered under its shade, and the pretty gentle lambs browsing close beside them. There was a swing too, and one little girl ran on before and got into it.

Presently two young men, the teachers or superintendents, came up, and the oldest girl put Ella on the other side of the tree, so that they should not see her, and perhaps blame her for running away from the other infants; and she got some sandwiches out of a basket for Ella. The child thought them delicious, and when she finished off with a jam tart she rose up quite a new creature, and ready to ramble off in company with her friend. Presently a horn was heard sounding, and all the children hastened across the common to the highroad. Ella's friend, who was called Polly, carried her most of the way, and there was a fine coach, as Ella thought, but it was only a brightly painted van with canvas awnings to keep off the sun, and it was drawn by four horses. Ella could have

screamed with delight, but she contented herself with putting her arms round her new friend's neck and kissing her. They stepped in first the



little girl with the Scotch cap and the others followed. Then there was a fuss to see if all the children were there.

"Mary Grey went with the infants," whispered



Polly to the others; "say nothing, for this is one of the infants here who got lost."

Then the gentlemen came over hastily and counted heads. The number was all right, and the driver got the order to start, while the two gentlemen and two lady teachers came on in a trap behind. Then there was a lot of tittering among the children, and settling down into their seats; and the coachman cracked his whip, and the four horses started off merrily, the blue ribbons on their ears flying in the wind.

They had gone about a mile when a light cart passed them. Through the curtains Ella could see it was the grocer's boys who came once a month for orders to Mountain House. She shrank well back, although there was no chance of them seeing her. She heard one of them speak to the driver.

"Did you see a little girl along the road anywhere?" he asked; "or among the fields?"

"Lots of 'em," he replied laughing.

"But this child has strayed away from home, and they're in a bad state about her."

"Ain't seen her," replied the coachman, as he pulled a little to one side to allow the cart to pass. "We've got our lot all right; good-day."

"Good-day," replied the young grocer, and Ella was delighted as she saw the cart shoot ahead.

I wondered what Ernest would feel, and I determined to leave Ella and return to Mountain House. Again we passed the cart, it was stopping opposite a farmhouse, and the boy went in for some orders, I suppose. I took a blue-bottle fly prisoner, and taking my seat between its wings



I ordered it to return by the way I desired to go. We passed close by the grocer's ear, as he started once more on the road.


"I shouldn't wonder but the little one tumbled into the lake and was drowned," the boy said.

I laughed to myself, thinking what fools they were. Then I whispered to my blue-bottle, and in a few minutes more we were inside the nursery of Mountain House.



## CHAPTER IX.

### HOW ELLA'S RUN-AWAY ENDED.

 HAVE noted that human beings who seem hardest and firmest to others are frequently at heart softest and most yielding, and they put on the contrary appearance to prevent people imposing upon them.

So it was with Miss Jane. She did not wish to confine Ella, but, acting as if she forgot all about her, and believing that the child was idling in the garden as usual, she took no notice of her movements till dinner-time. Then when the poet and Ernest came in and took their seats in answer to the bell, Ella was asked for. After his lessons Ernest had gone for a walk with his papa. I learned all this by degrees, and during the excitement her absence threw the whole family into. Susan was summoned, but she believed Ella had been with her aunt, and she was busy assisting at ironing linen in the laundry.

The grounds had been searched, the house almost turned upside down, and there was no sign of the child. Then the horrible dread that she had wandered to the lake and fallen in, took possession of her papa, and a search was organized, the neighbouring farmer and his men turning out with a will to render aid. Ernest hurried



off to Mrs. Campbell's with the hope that she might give him some hint or help in the search. As he passed through the garden he saw Amelia at a distance in one of the paths. He ran towards her, and found that she was studying a spider's web. Suddenly the thought arose in his mind, "Perhaps some one has stolen Ella, some gypsy or evil person, and they may be even now holding her as that spider is holding the fly."

He soon explained to Amelia what had happened.

"Don't you know that the Sunday-school children have been down for their treat?" she said;

"what if Ella had gone to play with them, and wandered so far that she lost her way?"

"That we thought of," replied Ernest; "but she is nowhere on the common between our house and here."

"She might be in the wood beyond. I'll start off at once and search," she proposed.

She ran into the house for her bonnet, and Mrs. Campbell came out to talk with Ernest and comfort him. She thought there was no danger of Ella being drowned, but that most likely she had lost her way.

Then Amelia started in one direction, and went on wonderfully fast considering her lameness, and Ernest went in another.

There were long shadows falling across the paths as he ran along calling, "Ella, Ella," as Willie had called when Fanny got lost; but there was no mocking voice to reply now, for Toph did not care about taking such a long journey.

"What's the matter?" asked a man Ernest suddenly found himself face to face with. The boy explained.

"Well, there's no fear of mad Peg catching her now, that's one comfort. She's been dead a year and more, but she might be drowned, I shouldn't wonder."

Ernest did not reply to this Job's comforter. To think of his dear little sister being drowned! he could not, would not believe it. And although ready to drop down with fatigue, he hurried on faster than before, calling her name aloud as he went, and again pausing to wipe the blinding tears from his eyes.

At this particular point the road ran through the wood, and Ernest had gone a considerable distance towards the town to which the children had been driven some hours before. A pony phaeton, containing a little girl and a gentleman, happened to pass just as Ernest once more cried out, "Ella, Ella," in a despairing tone.

"May I go into the wood, please, papa?" asked the little girl; "someone is calling the child's name."

I could hear and see her quite plainly as she stepped out of the phaeton, climbed up the grassy bank, and came in among the trees; but Ernest was nearly wild with excitement and blinded with tears, so that the little girl caught his arm and shook him before he noticed her.

"Stop, please, and rest; you are tired, I can see," she said, as she almost forced him down upon a grassy bank.

"Who are you?" he asked; "I must go and look for my sister Ella."

"I am Effie Mason," she replied simply, and as if everyone ought to know her. "Papa is the clergyman. We went to see the children come home from their drive and give them tea, and we have found your little sister, at least we think so; she was carried away in mistake for one of the infants." Here Ernest could control his emotion no longer; the tears ran down his cheeks, but he wiped them away quickly, ashamed of himself.

"I am so glad," he said in an apologetic tone, "that I cannot help it."

"You needn't mind me at all," she said, as she sat down and looked up into his face. "I'm not a boy, to laugh at you for being fond of your sister Ella, if that's her name. This little child is Ella, and she says she hates everybody but her brother Ernest; and she wouldn't leave Polly Malcolm, the girl that picked her up, so papa and I came to fetch her brother Ernest. And on the way we heard that the poet had lost his little daughter, and they were dragging the lake for her, and—and we've found her, I'm almost sure, and I'm so glad."

The little girl was so anxious and eager in telling her story that she never noticed her papa coming towards her through the trees.

Ernest, after explaining who he was, consented at once to accompany them back, and her father, the Rev. Mr. Mason, sent a man to tell Ernest's father that his little daughter was safe, for he



felt certain she was sister to Ernest from a certain likeness in the expression of the faces.

The drive was a rapid one, but Ernest did not think so, for he felt impatient.

At length the vehicle stopped before the door of a large building which Ernest had noticed when he came to the railway-station with his



father. They were soon inside and among the bright-faced happy children. Their entrance attracted general attention, and Ernest's eyes wandered from group to group. Suddenly he discovered at the further end of the room his sister Ella seated on a girl's lap. She was laughing and enjoying herself, apparently quite unconscious or careless of the trouble she had caused at home.

"Ella, Ella, darling," cried Ernest, rushing towards her, and heedless of the wondering looks bent upon him, "we thought you had been drowned;" and he clasped his arms round her and kissed her.

She did not seem particularly delighted to see him, but returned his caress in her usual fashion.

"Won't go back wif you," she said, shaking her head gravely; "you stay here wif Ella."

"Do you know that papa wants you, and aunty, and all of us?" he asked, chilled and disappointed at her manner.

"Ella in heaben wif good childers," she said quite gravely; "wanted to go 'way from aunty."

"You cannot stop here," said Mr. Mason in a kindly tone; "all these children are going to their homes; they don't live here, you know."

"You can come and see them all again," said Effie Mason consolingly.

"May Ella go home wif you?" she asked suddenly of the girl whose knee she sat upon.

The girl blushed and smiled, but shook her head, then glanced timidly at Ernest.

"I think my father knows you," she said.

Ernest was surprised, and looked it.

"He is the blind violin player," she explained.

How curious that it should be the daughter of the man he had a respect almost veneration for, Ernest thought; and Ella clung to her as if she had been an old friend, while the clergyman stood wondering how he should solve the difficulty, and Polly felt embarrassed. Effie came to the rescue.

"Polly can go with you to your home, Ella," she said; "would you like that?"

"Polly can come?" said Ella, looking at Ernest questioningly.

"I suppose so, if she wishes," replied Ernest, a vision of his aunt's stern face rising before him.

The girl had no objection to accompany them, and Ella's sun-bonnet was tied on, and as the evening was getting rather chilly Effie Mason wrapped one of her own warm scarves about the child's shoulders, and Polly carried her out and

put her in the phaeton and sat beside her. Ernest sat on the other side, while Mr. Mason took the front seat with his coachman. Effie said good-bye to Ella, and shook hands with Ernest, hoping she might meet him again. He hoped so too, and wondered if she knew Amelia, for he thought they might be good friends.

The drive was pleasant to him, for everything looked so weird and solemn by moonlight, the mountains threw gigantic shadows across the road, and the lake lay below white and pure as silver. If the world were so beautiful, Ernest thought, what must heaven be? Then a great thankfulness arose in his heart, an unspoken prayer for the safety of his little sister. I felt they were likely to get home safely, so I left Ernest—Ella had fallen fast asleep on Polly's arm—and hastened to Mountain House before them.

Of course they had heard of Ella's safety, and her father was sitting before the window in his study, thinking some of his grand and beautiful thoughts, which used to come when he was alone in the moonlight, or midnight, or early morning. I knew all about him pretty well now, but I did not quite understand his sister Miss Jane, so I left him and tried to find her. She was wander-

ing about restlessly, and I could see that her conscience troubled her sadly. She went downstairs and looked out of the hall door. All was calm and still. Somehow a little of the calm crept into her heart, and her lips moved silently. She said, for I knew without a sound coming:

“Lord, help me to guide the child aright, teach me for His sake who loved little children.”

She raised her eyes to the clear sky as she spoke, and saw a bird slowly winging its way towards the house. She thought it must be Toph, and stepping from the front door she watched it wheel round the left gable and cross the garden wall. Opening a door leading into the back portion of the grounds she still followed the course of the bird. Then she saw him alight on the sill of one of the attic windows and disappear inside.

The circumstance impressed her as curious, I could see. At another time Miss Jane was not liable to impressions, nor was she as a rule guilty of the feminine sin of curiosity; but now she never hesitated a moment, it would give her something to do, and she went inside the house once more, and ascended the stairs till she reached the attic. She knew the gable window at which Toph had entered, and since her arrival at Moun-

tain House she had frequently looked in at the odd collection of lumber, as she called it, disposed of here. One day she resolved to clear it up, but she would wait the absence of her brother and the children, because it was in the back of the house, directly over the poet's study, and she knew he disliked clearing up of all things, at least when conducted near him or overhead.



Now she walked in boldly, and by the moonlight she could see Toph drag something from under a bundle of rags and paper, and proceed to devour it.

The smell was far from pleasant, but she knew the nature of these birds was to hide any carrion they found, till it suited them to dispose of it. She would allow the bird to finish this time, but to-morrow the window should be fastened. A nice thing indeed for him to use this room as a store for his rubbish! She was about to turn away when her eyes fell upon a jar standing before a recess under the slates. Now only the day before she had asked Susan for just such a jar to hold some gooseberry wine, of which Miss Jane was a famous brewer. Two only had

been produced, and here was a third of which no one knew. She went over and took it up to find if it were whole and sound, and then her eye caught the gleam of something white in the recess behind it. She stooped to pick it up, and as she did so Toph suddenly discovered her presence, and fluttered over to the window-sill, croaking out his objections to his private property being meddled with.

"It is Ella's book; you must have carried it here, and I wouldn't believe her. I see it all now; she left it on the window-sill, and you pounced upon it."

"Croak, croak," replied Toph.

He was very angry, but Miss Jane did not see that.

"Susan did it," he screamed, and then went off into the string of names he used to know:

"Willie, Fanny, Fanny, Willie,—Willie did it, cat did it," and so on, till poor Miss Jane was glad to retreat from Toph's domain, carrying the recovered book with her.

If any doubt lingered in her mind as to who stole the book, the very legible mark of Toph's beak on the pink cover set it at rest.

She had scarcely reached the parlour when the sound of wheels was heard outside the door,

and Susan hastened to open it. Ella, now wide awake, was carried in by Polly; and her papa had hurried down from his study to welcome the lost lamb back again. They all went into the parlour, and the poet thanked Mr. Mason for his kindness, and Miss Jane spoke so stiffly no one would guess how grateful she felt.

Now there was a difficulty no one seemed prepared for. Ella insisted that Polly should undress her and put her to bed. Miss Jane stood in dumb amazement, and the two gentlemen, of course, could not arrange the matter.

"Please come with her," said Ernest, after an awful pause, "I shall show you where her room is."

Polly rose, glad to escape from the room, and Ella kissed her hand to Aunt Jane and the clergyman; she meant to see her papa again.

"Who is the girl?" asked Miss Jane anxiously, after the door was closed.

"A very good girl indeed, madam," replied Mr. Mason, "daughter to a man I respect highly."

He went on to explain how the violin player was also a composer, but from want of friends he could not get his work recognized. He had two daughters, and his wife was dead. This Polly had got a fair English education, and a certain

amount of training; she wished to go out as a kind of nursery governess.

I knew he spoke with a purpose, and the poet could see that too, but Miss Jane heard the words without catching their hidden meaning.

"Ella has taken a sudden fancy to the girl," said her papa. "I wonder if"—and he looked at Miss Jane—"if she requires a governess yet? I know she gives you a lot of trouble."

There was a struggle in the good lady's mind as she saw what her brother hinted at. Could she resign her charge of the child just as she was resolving to try a fresh experiment. But her failure had taught her humility, and after a moment's pause, during which the poet felt deeply anxious, she spoke.

"If the young girl can teach her and manage her better than I can, and I believe so, then you should engage her."

"Perhaps she would enter into the feelings of a child more readily, not having your wisdom and experience, madam," said the clergyman; "and the salary paid her is of no importance, compared with having her an inmate of a Christian, well-regulated family such as yours."

I saw that the words pleased Miss Jane as they were intended.



"Of course the matter rests entirely with my sister," said the poet. "She has kindly undertaken to manage the house for me. You will excuse me for a few minutes; I would like to see Ella before she goes to sleep."

I knew why he left them; he wanted Miss Jane to conclude the matter herself.

He met Polly coming down the stairs, and told her to go into the parlour, as his sister wanted to speak with her, then he passed to his own study.

Presently he heard the pattering of little feet on the carpet, the door opened, and Ella in her night-gown rushed over to his chair, while Ernest followed more slowly.

"We've been telling her how naughty she has been to run away, papa," said Ernest, "and she has come to tell you that she is sorry, and won't do it again."

"Ella sorry, papa," she said, climbing up on his knee, "but ain't naughty 'bout the book. Aunty's cross wif me for hidin' it, but didn't hide it."

"Very well, Ella, I believe you; but it looked bad, you know, dear, and you have given us all great pain and anxiety."

"May Polly stay wif Ella, papa?"

"If your aunt thinks it right, dear."

"I think she would be able to teach Ella better

than Aunt Jane," said Ernest candidly, "and I know her father: I would ask him if he could spare her."



"Say nothing about it, my boy; we shall see presently."

Then he took Ernest on his other knee, and they all looked out at the lovely moonlight as it fell on the waters of the lake, and the poet talked to them in a simple fashion of the shep-

herds sitting on the plains long ago on a bright night like this, and the angel hosts coming in the sky to tell them a little child was born who would save them and all mankind, and how they went to see the baby, and how the baby grew up, and although he was wise and good, far beyond the people around him, he obeyed his mother and father in all things, and that little children should follow his example if they wanted to go to him in the beautiful home up in the sky. Then he told them how He loved little children, and how He died for them. And he painted it all so plainly in words, about the pain, and the suffering, and the sorrow of that One so innocent and pure and holy, that I could not help melting to tears, so that I failed to observe how Ella was impressed. I know that she went away seeming very much subdued, and crept into her bed quietly.

Then Miss Jane came up to say that she had arranged for Polly coming the following day, and as Mr. Mason was about to go her brother had better come down. Ernest had gone down to the parlour already.

When his papa came in he pressed the good clergyman to stay for supper, but he declined, as his little daughter would be anxious till his

return. He promised, however, to drive over frequently and visit them.

Then Polly took her seat in the phaeton, after first thanking Miss Jane very humbly for promising her a trial as nursery governess.

"We shall expect you in the afternoon, Miss Malcolm," said Aunt Jane with more cordiality than usual. "Of course she must be Miss Malcolm to the servants," she explained to Ernest, who looked in surprise at his aunt.

The following morning at breakfast Miss Jane produced the missing book, and related where she found it. In the fulness of her delight Ella clasped her arms round her aunt's neck and kissed her. Then Aunt Jane told her that she had engaged a young lady named Miss Malcolm to be her governess, and she hoped Ella would attend to her governess's teaching better than she had done to hers.

"May I have Polly sometime, Aunty?" she asked humbly.

"We shall see about that, Ella?" replied the lady smiling.

And Ernest could scarcely keep from laughing, and papa smiled too, for he saw that Miss Jane was unbending, and contriving a little surprise for the child.

"Now run and play in the garden. Don't say a word, Ernest, till she sees the new governess," whispered Miss Jane as he rose to follow Ella.

As a rule children who are naughty enough to run away suffer punishment, but the rule was reversed in Ella's case, and I know that the kind treatment had a much better effect than severe measures would have had. Her nature was one to be led by kindness, but never by punishment.

Her delight when she found that her new governess, Miss Malcolm, and Polly were one and the same person, knew no bounds. She thanked her Aunt Jane, and resolved to do her best to please her, by attending to her lessons in future.



## CHAPTER X.

### A GYPSY AT MOUNTAIN HOUSE.

**I**T was wonderful what influence Polly, or, I ought to say, Miss Malcolm, had over Ella. She taught the child by sympathy, and she did not regard her labour as a toil, but rather a pleasure. So that by degrees Ella began to learn her lessons with pleasure, instead of, as formerly, with pain and as a drudgery.

I have noted that to influence the minds of children or young people, or old people either; one must be able to feel with them, to put one's self, as it were, in their place, and realize all their difficulties. Some consider it easy to teach little children, or act as if they thought so; but I know it is not easy, and very few are fitted for the task. Many a child has been discouraged and mentally blighted by a hard unfeeling teacher.

The fall of snow had been so long continued that Ernest found it impossible to visit Amelia Campbell. Of course he had seen her after Ella's

run-away, and Ella herself had visited Amelia in company with her governess. However, Ernest did not neglect his music, and as neither his aunt nor his papa cared to hear the squeaks and wailings of his violin, he carried the instrument to the loft over the stable, and practised there to his heart's content.

Miss Malcolm knew something of musical notation, and she instructed Ernest so far as she was able; but he supplemented this by a book on thorough bass and harmony, which he found in his papa's study. His violin was an ordinary modern one, purchased by his father as a birthday present. Miss Jane told him he would regret making his son such a present, and so he did, for as time went on he found the boy's mind so completely occupied by the science of music that he did not make such rapid progress in Latin and other studies as formerly. Of course Ernest tried his best to please his papa, but he had not the love for dry details which he formerly possessed, nor could he plod so diligently.

The poet had a long talk with his sister, and it was concluded that Ernest ought to be sent to school. Miss Jane objected to a boarding-school, but suggested that, if her brother permitted, she would write to their cousin, a great shipowner

and an unmarried man, to allow Ernest to live with him, while he attended a public school in the city or suburbs of London.

At first the poet objected, on the ground that his wealthy relative might imagine he wanted to interest him in his son. Miss Jane overruled this, telling her brother that it was only fancy, and till their relative showed some such feeling they had no right to judge him.

So the letter was written, and a very cordial answer returned. Then Ernest was informed of the proposed change. He received the news quietly, and commenced to get together those valuable trifles which boys delight in. He did not forget his rude attempts at musical composition, nor his beloved violin. It was arranged that he should leave Mountain House in time to begin school after the Christmas holidays; and Miss Jane made up her mind to give a children's party previous to his departure.

She waited, with her usual prudence, for the melting away of the snow, and when a heavy frost had set in, and the roads were as hard as iron, she wrote and despatched her invitations.

I followed the letter sent to Mrs. Campbell's, curious to see how Amelia would receive it, for I took an interest in the poor lame girl. She had



a friend called Marion, and her brother Tommy stopping with her for their holidays, and a council was held round the parlour fire as to how they should arrange about going. Ada had been invited, of course, but she had a severe cold, and the doctor forbade her going out.



"You can take Marion in place of her," proposed Tommy.

"So I intended," replied Amelia; "but what will you do? I would take you, but I shouldn't like to presume with Miss Jane."

"You sha'n't take me like a baby," said Tommy manfully, "and I'll be there too, I bet."

"Shame, shame! we don't bet, of course," said his sister; "he has learnt lots of slang at that school of his."

"Never mind the betting," interrupted Tommy, "I'll be there, and without an invitation too; see if I don't."

The girls smiled at each other; they both knew that Tommy was fond of practical joking, although far from being, like Harry, a vicious boy. "Will you tell us what you mean to do?" asked Marion smiling.

"No, I won't tell you, I'll manage it all by myself, and it is better you should know nothing of it beforehand."



I could see that Tommy meant what he said, and so I started off for Mountain House, not without a little curiosity as to what trick he might play. Although I could read people's thoughts, his were too many for me, because he hadn't made up his mind himself, nor formed a plan. I suppose, like many wiser people, he determined to be guided by circumstances.

When I got near Mountain House I heard a voice calling Toph, Toph, and I noticed Ella and her governess at the open window of the nursery,

waiting for the bird to come down to them. He was sitting on the tree, his feathers all ruffled up, and a really sad look upon his old cunning face. I could see he was not at all so young or strong as he used to be, and the cold was trying him severely. Miss Jane had closed up his window too, so that he had no means of coming in and going out at pleasure. I wondered if he would come to them and take to living in the house at last.

He hesitated for some time, then giving a dismal croak he swooped down from his tree, and flying in past Ella he perched upon the table. Then the window was closed, and Toph got a nice piece of meat from the kitchen. He was too hungry even to think of hiding it for the fun of finding it, but devoured it as if he had eaten nothing for months.

Presently Miss Jane came in, and Toph gave one dismal croak and flew to the top of a book-case, where he ruffled up his feathers and sat blinking down at her.

"I do believe that bird can't forgive me since I had the window fastened against him, if creatures like him have any sense. He knew I did it, and that I found out the book he had stolen."

"Susan did it, the cat did it," he said in his

peculiar voice, now hoarse and harsh with a cold. Ella laughed.

"You're not angry with him, Ella?" asked her aunt smiling; "he brought you into trouble."

"Ella couldn't be cross long, Aunt," she replied.

"Poor Toph, he can't help being mischievous, I suppose," said Aunt Jane. "I think we must allow him to stop in the house during this cold weather anyhow."

"Croak, croak, croak," said Toph, by which he meant to say, Thank you very much.

"You would think he understood what you say, madam," said Miss Malcolm.

"Toph knows very well," said Ella decidedly.

During the evening the raven made his way to his old room, and finding it "swept and garnished," he began speedily to take to himself all the rubbish he could find in odd corners of the house. Well for him that Miss Jane was too busy to notice his goings on, or have a search in the attic.

It was the evening before the party, and Ernest and Ella could not but suspect something, for the drawing-room had a great fire lit in it, and all the little tables and ornaments were removed or placed where they could receive no injury.

Ella coaxed her governess to tell her what it meant, and she got permission from Aunt Jane to tell both children that night before they went to bed. The Rev. Mr. Mason's family were to come, including Effie, of course, and the Campbells too. Ernest had met two boys, sons of the local physician, at Amelia's, and they had also been invited, so that a pretty fair gathering of children might be expected.

"I do hope it may keep nice and frosty all day to-morrow," said Ernest. "How good it is of Aunt Jane to think of having a party for us! I can scarcely believe it."

"Aunty's commin' good," said Ella; "and I likes to live wif her now."

"Your aunt was always good, Ella," said Miss Malcolm reprovingly.

Then the children said their prayers and I left them, determined to find, if possible, what Tommy meant to do.

Next morning I went to Mrs. Campbell's, and saw Ada dressing a doll she meant to send to Ella by her sister that evening. She did not feel angry at being prevented from accompanying her sister; I could see that she was not at all a selfish child. Presently Tommy came in, while I looked at her, and offered to take the doll for

her to Mountain House and give it to Ella. When she asked him how he meant to go he refused to tell her; and I knew he could not tell yet himself.

"I wish some one could put the doll where Ella would find it without knowing where it came from; lay it down in this fashion." And Ada put the doll on her lap, to show that its eyes were closed, and then took it up to show that they opened when it was lifted. "You see she will think the doll is alive, and it will be such a surprise for her."



"I'll do it," said Tommy confidently.

I noticed that he had a long talk with the grocer's boy that morning, and I heard enough to understand that Master Tommy was to get a seat on the light cart as far as Mountain House, late in the evening; and no one was to know anything about it. I waited to see Amelia and her friend set out to walk the two miles over the frosty road, they gave themselves plenty of time, and the trap was to be sent to bring them home at ten o'clock.

"So you're not coming after all, Tommy," said Amelia as they walked away from the door. "You would have lost your wager."

Tommy said nothing. I saw he was holding back his wish to tell them what he meant to do, but he only looked very foolish as they walked away.

"I do pity poor Tommy," said Amelia, "he will be dull."

"Never mind, he can keep Ada company," said Tommy's sister. And away they walked, Amelia leaning on her friend's arm, and the wintry sun shining down upon them.

I preceded them to Mountain House, and watched the guests arrive. They all went to the drawing-room and had tea; then Miss Malcolm set them to play several games, blindman's-buff, and others equally well known. The poet was present and enjoyed the fun like one of the children, and Miss Jane forgot to be her usual stiff self.

In the midst of the uproar I could hear a bell ring at the servants' door, and I hastened away to see if Tommy had reached the house with the grocer. I saw Cook stand in the hall, holding the door open in her hand.

"I called, ma'am, as I was passing to see if you wanted anything from town?" the boy said.

At first Cook could remember nothing. She was in a hurry seeing about supper, which had to be served presently. Then it occurred to her suddenly that she might require some spice.

"Wait a minute; I'll see if the nutmegs is run out." She walked away, leaving the door open, and then I saw Tommy enter carrying a bundle. He darted along the hall and ran up the back-stairs. They landed him upon the first floor, where the poet's study stood, and where several passages branched off. He was at a loss which way to turn, but he very wisely concluded that he would wait and hear how the fun was progressing before making his preparations. The door of a closet at the extreme end of a corridor stood half open, and favoured this resolve. There was no brilliant lighting up by gas, of course; an oil lamp swung from an archway at the head of the stairs, and only served to make the semi-darkness of the passages visible, so Tommy had no difficulty in concealing himself. He waited for some time listening to the sounds of laughter and merriment proceeding from the drawing-room, and almost regretting his resolve. At length he heard footsteps come upstairs, and voices which he did not recognize. A door was opened, and



they passed in. Then one of the number came out again, and a voice said:

"I cannot find the box of puzzles in the play-room. Come up, Ella, and find them yourself."

"I know where they are, Master Ernest," said Susan, "Miss Ella carried them to her own bedroom." The girl had advanced from one of the dark passages.

"Thank you, Susan, I'll get them," and Ernest came quite near the closet where Tommy was concealed, and threw open the door of a room.

"I've got it; she's always carrying things about," he said as he hurried down-stairs, two boys following him.

So Tommy knew which was Ella's room, and he lost no time in undoing his bundle and taking out the doll. Then he entered the little nest on tiptoe. It was a small room opening on another occupied by Miss Malcolm. He satisfied himself the little pink curtained crib could belong to no one but Ella, then he deposited the doll safely between the sheets, and retreated noiselessly, closing the door behind him. He was forced to retreat to his closet again, for some girls came up from below, and chatted and laughed on their way to the play-room. After they had gone Tommy crept out and explored, as he called it.

He found the foot of the stairs leading up to the attic. It was like going into a dark cavern, but Tommy was a bold little boy, and he thought only of accomplishing what was in his mind, and he dared not go into any of the rooms here lest some one should find him out, so he ascended the dark stairs bravely, and found himself in a great wide passage with various doors leading from it, some open, some closed. It was the attic, however, and no one was likely to interrupt him there. He opened a door, and a flood of moonlight poured in through the high window set in the roof. The room happened to be the one in which Toph stored his spoils, and here Tommy began to disguise himself. He first opened the bundle from which he had taken the doll, and took out a front of jet black wavy hair, and this he adjusted on his head by the aid of a pocket folding glass he had brought with him. He then put on a cloak of faded red stuff which fastened down the front firmly, and the hood of this he drew well over his head and tied it tightly under his chin.

Before paying this visit to the Campbells, he had just come from school, where he had assisted at private theatricals, got up by the boys before leaving, and these were his properties; even his sister Marion did not know he possessed them.

Before setting out he had stained his face and hands a light brown colour which exactly resembled sunburn. He slipped the looking-glass into his trousers pocket, thrust his arms through the wide sleeves of the cloak, and turned to leave the room, when a sudden noise behind startled him. Then there was a rush past him of something large and black, and he heard an ominous croak.

For his life Tommy could not refrain from screaming. He truly believed at the moment that an evil being had come to pay him a visit. The perspiration stood in large drops upon his forehead, and his limbs refused to carry him from the spot. Then common sense came to his aid, and with a great effort he turned round and saw the raven perched upon the window-sill, like a black blot upon the moonlight. He was angry at himself for being alarmed at a bird, and was about to go down when he heard footsteps approaching, and the sound of voices.

"It wasn't Toph croaked; I know a raven's croak. I tell you that I was just passing the foot of those stairs, and the scream was enough to curdle one's blood."

Tommy recognized Amelia's voice, and he knew her to be full of fancies and superstitions.

"Let us go up and see what it is?" proposed Miss Malcolm. "I am not the least afraid."

"I shouldn't care to go, thank you," said Amelia, "but I'll wait here till you come down again. I am sure there are lots of rooms on the attic of this house, it is so large and straggling."

"There are about six rooms," replied Miss Malcolm, "but what could harm you?"

"If you had heard what I heard you wouldn't go, nor you mustn't go without one of the boys."

I heard her run to the top of the stairs and call: "Come up some of you boys quickly, you're wanted here."

Tommy had intended to go down and slip out by the back-door, then come back as a poor gypsy girl, and ask for food and permission to rest an hour. Now that would be all useless, and he withdrew into the further corner of the room, and took his stand where there was little light. I heard the voices of two boys, which I did not recognize; they offered to accompany Miss Malcolm. One of them after hearing Amelia's story was rather nervous, and proposed to get a candle, but Miss Malcolm said that was nonsense, as it was quite clear moonlight on the attic. The other boy said he wasn't afraid of anything, and walked up the narrow stairs boldly.

As the door of Toph's room stood open, and the window was opposite it, of course they naturally entered it first. The boy had no sooner set foot on the threshold than Toph gave a croak and flew over his head. He screamed and would have rushed down-stairs again, but the governess laughed at him and told him it was only a pet raven. Then he felt ashamed of himself, and marched boldly in, the governess entering at the same time, and the nervous boy bringing up the rear.

"What a splendid view of the mountains you have from this window; I wish Effie Mason saw it."

"It is very lovely indeed," said Miss Malcolm, approaching after she had given one look round, but failed to distinguish Tommy in his cloak from the lumber in the dark corner.

The timid boy went to the top of the stairs and asked Amelia to tell Effie and the others they had better come up to see the fine view. So Amelia called them, and Effie, Marion, and Ernest came up, but Ella was too young to care for views. Amelia grew bolder when they arrived, and ascended the dark stairs with them. They satisfied themselves looking at the mountains, and turned to explore the other rooms. Of

course there was nothing to be seen in any one of them, and they were returning along the passage to the top of the stairs, when a groan sounded from the room they had first visited. They paused terror-stricken; Amelia had not been mistaken after all. Then there was a wild shriek that they might have known as half laughter, for Tommy could scarcely repress his mirth. Amelia made a desperate rush towards the stairs, and the others followed, but Ernest and Miss Malcolm looked in as they passed. One look was enough for them; Tommy stood right in the moonlight and waved his arms aloft. His figure looked weird and terrible enough, and his wild shriek of laughter sent the whole party down the stairs as if a bogey were really at their heels. It did not require another wild scream from the top of the stairs to send them down the next flight, and the timid boy was so frantic in his efforts to escape that he positively rolled from top to bottom. Marion and Amelia came down somehow in a heap, and Miss Malcolm, Ernest, and the other boy trembled so that they could go no further when they reached the hall.

"What is all this?" asked the cook, coming forward from the kitchen.

It was some time before any one spoke, then Miss Malcolm replied:

"I believe some evilly disposed person has hidden in the attic to frighten us."

"It's only that bird, I'll promise you," she said stoutly; "but I'll soon see."

The other servants also came forward to learn what had happened, and with much laughter they volunteered to accompany Cook. Susan particularly made fun of their alarm, and threw out a hint that Miss Malcolm was chicken-hearted. I knew Susan had a little envy of this young lady because Ella had taken to her so completely. Miss Malcolm only smiled in her gentle fashion, and admitted that she might have been mistaken.

They all waited at the foot of the stairs to see the result of the exploration.

Ernest suggested that they should stand well back into the hall, as Cook was so stout he wouldn't care to have her roll down upon him.

So they ascended in their strength, the cook and Susan first, the parlour-maid and the page-boy next, and one of the gardeners behind, his great shoes making noise enough to scare away any number of ghosts.

Meantime the poet came out to learn what the

uproar meant, and Aunt Jane joined him, somewhat annoyed to hear the hobnails mounting upon the Brussels stair-carpet. The other children came out, and a grown-up young lady, so that the hall was quite full.

They had scarcely learned what caused the alarm when the house re-echoed with shrieks, and the whole party came down the stairs with a rush, the gardener, who had been put in the front, saw *it*—the terrible *it*—first, and pushing all the others aside, he tumbled down the attic stairs, and cleared the last flight at a leap. The cook rolled down as Ernest expected, and Susan, when she reached the foot, went off into hysterics.

"There must be something wrong, surely," said Ernest's papa.

"It's a—a—great—big woman, sir, all red, sir," gasped the gardener; "a witch, sir. She's got on a bonnet like one, and long white teeth, sir, like fangs."

"We must see what it is that alarms you all," said the poet. "I'll go up alone."

"O, sir, for goodness sake, sir, don't; for the sake of your children left orphans, sir, I beg you on my bended knees," prayed the stout cook. She had not yet managed to regain her feet since her tumble.



"I'll go with you, papa," proposed Ernest.

"Better not," put in Miss Jane; "I hate such nonsense. Get me the stable lantern lit, and you," she said to her brother, "had better get your pistols. Any one who dares to frighten a respectable family, particularly when supper is cooling on the table, deserves to be shot;" and Miss Jane looked so fierce one might imagine she could do it, but I knew it was all talk; she wouldn't hurt a living soul.

"Never mind pistols," said the poet smiling. "I shouldn't wonder but we'll find a bundle of rags in some curious position."

"A bundle of rags, sir! Mercy on us, sir, don't go. Could a bundle of rags scream, and grin its teeth, and shake its arms about?" asked the cook.

"It is wonderful what fancy can make them do, Cook."

By this time the man, who was still trembling, had returned with the lantern, and Miss Jane walked up first, while the cook and Susan, who had now recovered from her fits, looked upon her as quite lost. Tommy heard all the conversation from the top of the attic stairs, and knowing that it was persons in authority who were now coming, he drew back once more into the shadow.

As the others had done, so did Miss Jane and her brother. They walked straight into Toph's room, and Miss Jane determined to go into the matter thoroughly. So she put down the lantern on the top of a small cask which stood convenient, and commenced her search. Tommy felt he had no chance with this stern lady; he could not hope to frighten her off, but he ventured a little moan. She started, prayed for herself quietly, and asked her brother what that meant. He was standing looking out of the window, but the sound startled him too.

"It is in this room, and came from that dark corner," he said.

There was a sudden rush made for the door by a curious figure in a red cloak. Miss Jane could not help screaming, but the poet dashed forward, and before Tommy could escape he secured him; and telling him that he need not make any resistance, he led him down-stairs into the hall in the presence of the whole family. Miss Jane, who had regained her courage, followed with the lantern.

"Who are you? Where did you come from? What were you doing upstairs? and how did you get in?" were a few of the questions asked, while Ella clapped her hands and exclaimed that

it must be the gypsy girl who had stepped out of her toy picture-book.

"Shut her up till we send to the nearest town for the police," advised Miss Jane. "No doubt she meant to open the door at night for a gang of burglars."

"I think before we decide what to do with the child, for she is only a child, we had better give her time to speak," said the poet; "she has not been able to put in a word edgeways since I brought her down."

The servants drew back abashed, all but the cook, who stood with her arms folded, regarding Tommy with searching scrutiny.

"Just before she speaks, let me tell you, sir, who she is," said the cook, taking the privilege of an old servant in having her own way. Tommy listened anxiously to hear who he was, for during the excitement he had made up his mind not to reveal himself if possible, unless his sister Marion or Amelia recognized him.

"Well, what do you think, Cook?" asked the poet.

"I know, sir, I'm positive sure. After you went away from here, sir, with the poor missis, a horde of gypsies camped on the common, just behind the house. We was in fear of them

night and day, and a wench like this one used to come up a beggin' salt an' such like, at the back-door."

"That is nearly four years ago now, Cook; the girl would have grown up."

"Bless your heart, sir, there were 'alf a dozen of them all like steps of stairs; this is one of the younger ones, and she knows her way. I wouldn't wonder but, as Miss Jane says, she meant mischief."

"Well, what have you to say?" asked the poet, turning to Tommy, who shrank back as if in alarm, into the shadow of the massive pillars supporting the archway over the stairs. He dropped a low curtsy to Miss Jane as he spoke in a half whining, half beseeching tone.

"Sweetest lady, ask her," and he pointed to the cook, "if we ever stole anything from the house or the neighbourhood while we were here." Miss Jane could not resist the appeal, and the quickness which singled her out as the mistress of the house.

I have noted that all the mortals I ever knew had a point on which they were weak, and clever ones find it out and make use of it.

However, it was not Tommy's unaided cleverness, for he had heard tell of Miss Jane before.

"Did they ever steal anything, Cook?" asked the lady.

"Well, no, ma'am, I can't say as they did, but we watched them too well."

"I don't believe we are justified in suspecting people of evil, just because they may have a bad name," said the poet. And then he went off into speculations over gypsies, recalling all he had read and heard of their origin and wanderings, and then coming back to the present, he wondered if this girl's story would give him the foundation for a dramatic poem. And I'm sure I don't know where he would have stopped, but the voice of Miss Jane brought him back to the present, with a sudden shock, just like having a pail of icy water over him.

"What did you come in here for, and why did you moan to frighten everybody?" she asked in her clear sharp tones.

"The door was open, my lady, and I walked in, thinking I might find some corner to lie down in till the morning. I'd got my foot hurt, and any one would moan at that. Then I daren't stop below, for so many people were about."

"But what about your friends?" asked the poet.

"They went on and left me behind, your worship, they didn't care what became of me."

"I think you had better take her to the kitchen fire, Cook, and give her some supper, she can stop till the morning if she likes; now that I think of it she must be telling truth, for she wouldn't have made a noise if she intended to open the doors for any one."

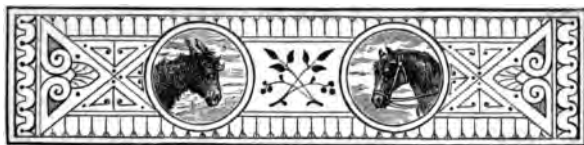
"Bless you, my lady," said Tommy, making an awkward curtsy, and with difficulty repressing his laughter.

Then Miss Jane hurried every one in for supper, while Ella said that afterwards she would see the nice gypsy girl. But she was doomed to disappointment. It seemed Cook had set something to eat before the strange visitor, and left the kitchen about her business in the pantry. When she returned she found the bird had flown, and the back-door standing wide open, left no doubt as to how she had gone.

The poet gave them quite an eloquent discourse upon the peculiarities of these nomads. Ernest and Amelia were interested and delighted, but Miss Jane interrupted the tide of eloquence by announcing the vehicle was at the door waiting for Amelia and Marion. And presently the doctor's carriage and a trap arrived for the other visitors, and Ella bade them all good-bye reluctantly.

Surprises were not over for Ella. When the guests departed she found the wonderful doll with the living eyes in her bed. Miss Jane suggested that some of the little visitors had put it there to surprise her; but the child was not willing to accept such a commonplace method of accounting for the mystery. She felt certain the gypsy girl had something to do with it, and Ernest inclined to the same belief. The servants had their own opinions still about that gypsy, and the cook declared that it was no wonder she had been frightened, for she never knew a real gypsy or tramp who would go away and leave good victuals untasted behind them. It was no more a gypsy than she was, but something uncanny, and they should all see what would happen.

A letter by a messenger in the morning from Amelia set all their speculations and fancies at rest. Cook was indignant at being made game of by a mischievous lad, and secretly Miss Jane felt very much the same. The poet laughed quietly at himself when he remembered how nearly he had been inspired by a masquerading boy.



## CHAPTER XI.

### CONCLUSION OF THE FAIRY'S STORY.

**T**HREE weeks after the party Ernest set out for London in company with his papa.

He was sorry at leaving his home and his sister Ella and Amelia, but he knew that his papa knew best what was good for him, and no one could guess how he felt, for he put on a cheerful face as he said good-bye. At first everything seemed new and strange in the London house, but the housekeeper did her best to put him at his ease, and Mr. Jeffrey, his papa's cousin, was an amiable and intellectual man. He desired Ernest to call him Uncle for convenience sake. Before a month had passed he felt almost at home in his new duties, and he worked hard to take a good place at his form in school.

So time wore on, and nothing took place in Ernest's life particularly worth noting. He took little notice of me now, he was so busy cramming in facts, and I almost decided to take a journey



to Mountain House and see the poet, when a friend came home with Mr. Jeffrey one evening to dine. He heard Ernest practising on his violin, for it was a half holiday, and all his work done. He asked about the performer, and Mr. Jeffrey told him how the boy only played his own compositions, he believed. The visitor, a clever musician himself, asked to see Ernest, and he, delighted at finding some one who could understand and sympathize in his work, displayed his attempts unreservedly, and did not hesitate to say, when asked, that to be a great composer was the ambition of his life.

No more was said at the time, but in a month afterwards his uncle asked him to call at his office on the way home from school. Once there Mr. Jeffrey took him all over the place, showing him how many clerks were at work, and explaining how the firm sent ships to the ends of the earth. He told him how grand a thing it was to transact such enormous business within these four walls, and explained, so far as the boy could understand, what interests and responsibilities were involved in the honest and correct management of affairs.

Then he took him to his own room, and, seated in his arm-chair, he told Ernest that his father

looked to see him in the firm as a clerk at first, but Mr. Jeffrey said that if Ernest proved himself trustworthy he could set no limit to his advancement.

Next he told him that his friend had discovered a promise of genius in his crude compositions, and if he would prefer it after duly considering what he had told him, he would place him with one of the best masters of the day, and he might, if he wished, become a musical composer.

"If you please, sir," said Ernest, "I made up my mind long ago; I cannot be anything else. I have no interest in it; I should never care for business—never."

Mr. Jeffrey paused for a moment after the boy spoke; he was disappointed, and yet he knew human nature too well to attempt argument on the point.

"Very well, Ernest," he said, "it shall be as you will."

He thought the boy was young, and perhaps he would find out his mistake in time yet to embrace a business career.

I was very anxious to find how they would like the news at Mountain House, for I could see Mr. Jeffrey write a letter a fortnight after Ernest had been placed with the celebrated master. By

chance one day a man passed Ernest and I as we were going through the street; he was thinking of home, and how his aunt would be vexed at the news of his choice. The man's coat was a



rough homespun. I could see he had come over the Border, for it was covered with thistle-down which his railway-journey had not dislodged. One of the downs floated quite near me. The opportunity was too good to be lost, so seizing it I mounted at once, and, *Hey presto!* we were off towards Scotland in a whiff. I knew I need not

give it any directions, for a real Scotch thistle-down cannot rest on any other than its native soil. We beat the "Flying Scotchman" hollow, and I managed to get off my seat while my steed



rested among the ivy at the nursery window of Mountain House.

I passed in through a tiny opening in the frame, and saw Ella standing before the table dressing the very doll which had been left in her bed by Tommy. She had a pin in her mouth, and Miss Jane stood at the door and looked in at that moment.

"Take that out directly, Ella. How often have I told you never to put a pin in your mouth?"

She walked away after speaking, in her usual

hurried fashion. Ella obeyed at once, I noticed that.

Presently she returned, and Miss Malcolm with her. Then the poet came in with letters in his hand. He read one from Ernest; it was full of his doings at school, and he also mentioned at last, although I could see he thought it best, how he was improving in his musical studies.

Miss Jane said it was dreadfully foolish for her cousin to encourage Ernest's folly by placing him with a master. I could see his papa felt rather proud of him.

"You know, Jane," he said, "if he has a genius for it, that makes a difference."

"Genius!" she repeated in a tone of contempt; "give me good solid work any day in preference. Geniuses are mostly fools; to think of such a business open to him!" and she sighed.

"Perhaps you are not far astray about geniuses," said her brother re-echoing her sigh, and he left the room.

"I like Ernest to play his fiddle, Aunty," said Ella, "it is so nice."

"Very nice for leisure time, no doubt," said Miss Jane sharply. I noticed that Ella seemed more thoughtful than she used to be, and she was much more disposed to bow to the authority

of the reigning powers, her governess, her aunt, and papa, than formerly.

On the top of the press where toys and books were kept, I saw Toph sitting solemnly, sometimes with closed eyes, and again blinking down at Ella and Miss Jane. Some lines the poet used to quote came into my head:

“And the raven never flitting still is sitting, still is sitting,

\* \* \* \* \*

And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon that is dreaming.”

That was my last look at the inmates of Mountain House. I returned to Ernest, determined to spend the remaining time of my liberty with him. Even after he had proved his ability in the art he had chosen, he offered to go into the counting-house if his father willed it, but the poet was too wise to ask such a sacrifice. I stood by him in time of trial, of labour, and of triumph. I see him, as I saw him last, preparing to play a piece of his own composition, before one of the best judges of music in Europe. On this man's verdict his fate would depend, and the verdict was in his favour. His generous uncle sent him to a great composer in Italy, to complete his education.

I have a notion that it is not at all strange for the son of a poet to be a musical composer.

Although I was forced to leave Ernest, my



brother was permitted to take my place, and remain always near him. I think he could scarcely get on well without one of our family. From him I learned that although my friend became famous in his profession, he never became vain, but remained at heart the same truthful, unselfish

Ernest I had loved; and we fairies know that these qualities give the true greatness, which endures for ever and ever.

THE END.



LIST OF  
NEW BOOKS,  
SUITABLE FOR  
GIFTS AND PRESENTATIONS.



PUBLISHED BY

BLACKIE & SON;  
49 & 50 OLD BAILEY, LONDON, E.C.;  
GLASGOW, EDINBURGH, AND DUBLIN.





## LIST OF BOOKS FOR THE YOUNG PUBLISHED BY BLACKIE & SON.

---

### Books at 7s. 6d.

THE UNIVERSE; OR, THE INFINITELY GREAT AND INFINITELY  
LITTLE. By F. A. POUCHET, M.D.

### Books at 6s.

IN THE KING'S NAME. By G. MANVILLE FENN.

UNDER DRAKE'S FLAG. By G. A. HENTY.

EASY STUDIES IN WATER-COLOR, with Plates.

SKETCHES IN WATER-COLOR by various Artists, with Plates.

### Books at 5s.

STORIES OF OLD RENOWN. By ASCOT R. HOPE. Illustrated  
by GORDON BROWNE.

FACING DEATH: a Tale of the Coal Mines. By G. A. HENTY.

NAT THE NATURALIST. By G. MANVILLE FENN.

### Books at 3s. 6d.

BROTHER AND SISTER. By MRS. LYSAGHT.

DORA: a Girl without a Home. By MRS. R. H. READ.

GARNERED SHEAVES. By MRS. E. R. PITMAN.

FLORENCE GODFREY'S FAITH. By MRS. E. R. PITMAN.

LIFE'S DAILY MINISTRY. By MRS. E. R. PITMAN.

MY GOVERNESS LIFE. By MRS. E. R. PITMAN.

UNRAVELLED SKEINS. By GREGSON GOW.

MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME.

### Books at 2s. 6d.

THE BALL OF FORTUNE. By CHARLES PEARCE.

THE FAMILY FAILING. By DARLEY DALE.

EPISODES OF THE SEA IN FORMER DAYS.

EPISODES OF FOREIGN LIFE AND MANNERS.

EPISODES OF CAPTIVITY AND EXILE.

EPISODES OF PERSONAL ADVENTURE.

EPISODES OF HISTORY.

EPISODES OF DISCOVERY IN ALL AGES.

THE NEWSPAPER READER.

THE BRITISH BIOGRAPHICAL READER.

LONDON PAST AND PRESENT.

*(Continued on third page of Cover)*



BLACKIE & SON'S

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

---

*New Series for the Young.*

---

By ASCOT R. HOPE.

STORIES OF OLD RENOWN:

TALES OF KNIGHTS AND HEROES.

By G. A. HENTY.

UNDER DRAKE'S FLAG:

A TALE OF THE SPANISH MAIN.

FACING DEATH;

OR THE HERO OF THE VAUGHAN PIT: A TALE OF  
THE COAL MINES.

By G. MANVILLE FENN.

IN THE KING'S NAME;

OR THE CRUISE OF THE KESTREL.

NAT THE NATURALIST;

OR A BOY'S ADVENTURES IN THE EASTERN SEAS.

By ROSA MULHOLLAND.

FOUR LITTLE MISCHIEFS.

By MRS. ELIZABETH LYSAGHT.

BROTHER AND SISTER;  
OR THE TRIALS OF THE MOORE FAMILY.

By CHARLES PEARCE.

THE BALL OF FORTUNE;  
OR NED SOMERSET'S INHERITANCE.

By MRS. EMMA RAYMOND PITMAN.

GARNERED SHEAVES:  
A TALE FOR BOYS.

FLORENCE GODFREY'S FAITH:  
A STORY OF AUSTRALIAN LIFE.

LIFE'S DAILY MINISTRY:  
A STORY OF EVERYDAY SERVICE FOR OTHERS.

MY GOVERNESS LIFE;  
OR EARNING MY LIVING.

By MRS. R. H. READ.

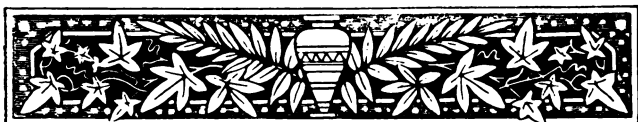
OUR DOLLY:  
HER WORDS AND WAYS.

FAIRY FANCY:  
HER NOTES AND NOTIONS.

DORA:  
A GIRL WITHOUT A HOME.

By ALICE CORKRAN.

ADVENTURES OF MRS. WISHING-TO-BE.



## IN THE KING'S NAME:

Or the Cruise of the *Kestrel*. By G. MANVILLE FENN, author of "Off to the Wilds," "Middy and Ensign," "Hollowdale Grange," "Charlie Lance," "Nat the Naturalist," &c. Illustrated by 12 full-page Pictures printed in black and tint. Crown 8vo, cloth, with attractive Design on side, bevelled boards, price 6s.

"In the King's Name" is a spirited story of the Jacobite times, concerning the adventures of Hilary Leigh, a young naval officer in the preventive service off the coast of Sussex, on board the *Kestrel*. Leigh is taken prisoner by the adherents of the Pretender, amongst whom is an early friend and patron who desires to spare the lad's life, but will not release him. The narrative is full of exciting and often humorous incident. Mr. Fenn's juvenile books have achieved a wide reputation, and "In the King's Name" is one of the most lively and characteristic of his works.

## UNDER DRAKE'S FLAG.

A Tale of the Spanish Main. By G. A. HENTY, Special Correspondent of the "Standard," author of "The March to Magdala," "The March to Coomassie," "The Young Buglers," "The Cornet of Horse," "In Times of Peril," "Facing Death," &c. Illustrated by 12 full-page Pictures printed in black and tint. Crown 8vo, cloth, with elegant Design on side, bevelled boards, price 6s.

"Under Drake's Flag," is a story of the days when England and Spain struggled for the supremacy of the sea, and England carried off the palm. The heroes of the story sail as lads with Drake in the expedition in which the Pacific Ocean was first seen by an Englishman from a tree-top on the Isthmus of Panama, and in his great voyage of circumnavigation. The historical portion of the story is absolutely to be relied upon, but this, although very useful to lads, will perhaps be less attractive than the great variety of exciting adventure through which the young adventurers pass in the course of their voyages.

## STORIES OF OLD RENOWN.

Tales of Knights and Heroes. By ASCOT R. HOPE, author of "Spindle Stories," "The Old Tales of Chivalry," "Stories of Long Ago," &c. &c. With nearly 100 Illustrations, of which 8 are full-page size, from Drawings by GORDON BROWNE. Crown 8vo, cloth elegant, 5s.

A Series of the best of the Stories of Noble Knighthood and Old Romance, told in refined and simple language, and adapted to young readers. A book possessing remarkable attractions, especially for boys who love to hear of great deeds and enterprises of high renown.

## FACING DEATH:

Or the Hero of the Vaughan Pit. A Tale of the Coal Mines.

By G. A. HENTY, author of "In Times of Peril," "The Young Buglers," "Cornet of Horse," "Under Drake's Flag," &c. With 8 full-page Illustrations printed in black and tint. Crown 8vo, cloth elegant, bevelled boards, price 5s.

"Facing Death" is a story with a purpose. It is intended to show that a lad who makes up his mind firmly and resolutely that he will rise in life, and who is prepared to face toil and ridicule and hardship to carry out his determination, is sure to succeed. The hero of the story, though only a colliery lad, is a character that boys will delight in. He is a typical British boy, dogged, earnest, generous, and though "shamefaced" to a degree, is ready to face death in the discharge of duty. His is a character for imitation by boys in every station, who will assuredly be intensely interested in the narrative.

## NAT THE NATURALIST:

Or a Boy's Adventures in the Eastern Seas. By GEO. MANVILLE

FENN, author of "In the King's Name," "Off to the Wilds," "The Vicar's People," &c. &c. Illustrated by 8 full-page Pictures executed in black and tint. Crown 8vo, cloth elegant, bevelled boards, price 5s.

This is a pleasant story of a lad who, though he is brought up in a strictly quiet fashion by an aunt, has a great desire to go abroad to seek specimens in natural history, and has that desire gratified by an uncle who comes home from distant lands, whence he brings a beautiful collection. The boy Nat and his uncle Dick go on a voyage to the remoter islands of the Eastern seas, and their adventures there are told in a truthful and vastly interesting fashion, which will at once attract and maintain the earnest attention of young readers. The descriptions of Mr. Ebony, their *black comrade*, and of the scenes of savage life, are full of genuine humour.

*Twenty-third Thousand, medium 8vo, cloth elegant, 7s. 6d.*

## THE UNIVERSE:

OR THE INFINITELY GREAT AND THE INFINITELY LITTLE. A Sketch of Contrasts in Creation, and Marvels revealed and explained by Natural Science. By F. A. POUCHET, M.D. Illustrated by 273 Engravings on wood, of which 56 are full-page size. Sixth Edition, medium 8vo, cloth elegant, gilt edges, 7s. 6d.; also full morocco, blind tooled.

The object of this Work is to inspire and extend a taste for natural science. It is not a learned treatise, but a simple study. The title adopted indicates that the author has gathered from creation at large, often contrasting the smallest of its productions with the mightiest.



Neptune's Cup.

"We can honestly commend this work, which is admirably, as it is copiously, illustrated."—*Times*.

"As interesting as the most exciting romance, and a great deal more likely to be remembered to good purpose."—*Standard*.

"Scarcely any book in French or in English is so likely to stimulate in the young an interest in the physical phenomena."—*Fortnightly Review*.

"The volume, and it is a splendid one, will serve as a good pioneer to more exact studies."—*Saturday Review*.

## BROTHER AND SISTER:

Or the Trials of the Moore Family. By ELIZABETH J. LYSAGHT, author of "Nearer and Dearer," "Over the Border," "Under the Sword," "Mike o' the Shannon," &c. With 6 full-page Illustrations in black and tint. Crown 8vo, cloth elegant, bevelled boards, price 3s. 6d.

"Brother and Sister." An interesting story for young people, showing by the narrative of the vicissitudes and struggles of a family which has "come down in the world," and of the brave endeavours of its two younger members, how the pressure of adversity is mitigated by domestic affection, mutual confidence, and hopeful honest effort.

## D O R A :

Or a Girl without a Home. By Mrs. R. H. READ, author of "Our Dolly," "Phyllis and Corydon," "The Lawyer's Daughter," &c. &c. Crown 8vo, cloth elegant, price 3s. 6d.

The story of a friendless orphan girl, who is placed as pupil-teacher at the school in which she was educated, but is suddenly removed by hard and selfish relatives, who employ her as a menial as well as a governess. Through a series of exciting adventures she makes discoveries respecting a large property which is restored to its rightful owners, and at the same time she secures her escape from her persecutors. The character of Dora is a very sweet one, and the interest of the story is so sustained that it can scarcely fail to please the reader.

## UNRAVELLED SKEINS:

Or Tales for the Twilight. By GREGSON GOW. Illustrated by four facsimile Designs in black and tint. Crown 8vo, cloth elegant, price 3s. 6d.

"For a volume of neat stories carefully told commend us to this."—*Scotsman*.

"Will doubtless serve as a sufficient stimulant to the dubious hours of twilight, without depriving the hours of night of their natural stimulant of sleep."—*Times*.

## MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME.

A Hand-book of Greek and Roman Mythology, by E. M. BERENS. Illustrated from Antique Sculptures in a highly interesting and instructive manner. Cloth elegant, price 3s. 6d.

"Written in a spirit of reverent sympathy and of well-sustained interest, while its absolute purity should secure it a place in every family."—*Schoolmaster*



## GARNERED SHEAVES.

A Tale for Boys. By MRS. EMMA RAYMOND PITMAN, author of "Mission Life in Greece and Palestine," "Heroines of the Mission Field," "Vestina's Martyrdom," "Profit and Loss," &c. &c. With 4 full-page Illustrations printed in black and tint. Crown 8vo, cloth neat, price 3s. 6d.

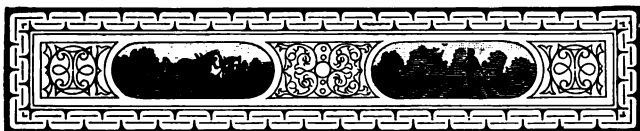
This Tale gives in narrative form the history and adventures of a class of Sunday-school boys. Each boy's career is full of interest. In some chapters we are taken to America, during the civil war, and mingle in scenes relating to the battle-field; while, in other chapters, we listen to the quiet teachings of one of God's faithful servants, who strove to "garner sheaves for Christ." The wide difference between the honourable upright youth, and one who is clever and cunning, but dishonest, is here depicted by incidents from the life; and it is proved that "godliness hath promise of the life that now is," as well as of that which is to come. From this tale Sunday-school teachers may learn that their "labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

## FLORENCE GODFREY'S FAITH.

A Story of Australian Life. By MRS. EMMA RAYMOND PITMAN, author of Mission Life in Greece and Palestine," "Heroines of the Mission Field," "Vestina's Martyrdom," "Profit and Loss," &c. &c. With 4 full-page Illustrations printed in black and tint. Crown 8vo, cloth neat, price 3s. 6d.

This Tale traces the career and adventures of a family who were forced to leave Manchester during the time of the cotton famine, and seek a home in Australian wilds. Florence, the central character of the story, is a very lovely one; and in spite of girlish timidity, girlish fear, and natural shrinking, succeeds in raising a Christian church in the wilderness. Tom Higgins, the prodigal ne'er-do-well, and Dick Fowler, the converted convict, as well as many minor characters, are among the fruits of her labours there. Alfred Godfrey follows the sea, and meets with much trial and hardship on board—experiences which test and purify his character. The story teaches the lesson of perseverance in well-doing, and shows how faithful effort is rewarded.





## LIFE'S DAILY MINISTRY.

A Story of Everyday Service for Others. By Mrs. EMMA RAYMOND PITMAN, author of "Mission Life in Greece and Palestine," "Heroines of the Mission Field," "Vestina's Martyrdom," "Profit and Loss," &c. &c. With 4 full-page Illustrations printed in black and tint. Crown 8vo, cloth neat, 3s. 6d.

A Story of self-sacrifice in various forms, and of some touching experiences of life. Some of the characters are very attractive, others very repulsive; but all tend to show that true honour and happiness are to be found in serving others, according to our capacity, and so imitating Him "who went about doing good." Some experiences of a sincere and gifted, but doubting youth, helpless through spinal disease and destined to early death, and his attainment of faith, light, and peace, are peculiarly affecting. His brother, the medical student, is eventually brought back to faith in his mother's God, after wandering very far in sin and folly. Olive Forrester, the chief heroine of the story, presents an example of saintly self-denial for the sake of her dead sister's children.

## MY GOVERNESS' LIFE:

Or Earning my Living. By Mrs. EMMA RAYMOND PITMAN, author of "Mission Life in Greece and Palestine," "Heroines of the Mission Field," "Vestina's Martyrdom," "Profit and Loss," &c. &c. With 4 full-page Illustrations. Cloth neat, 3s. 6d.

This Story, told in the first person, is largely concerned with a young woman cast upon the world by her father's death, and compelled to earn her living by the exercise of whatever talent she possesses. Some of the minor characters in the narrative are skilfully depicted, notably the old Cornish couple who figure in the little Methodist chapel; and the young man of science, who is shown to have missed his way in substituting science for faith in a personal God, but by painful chastening is recovered and led to the cross of Christ as a humble believer. Finally, he marries the heroine of the story, and turns out a good and useful man. The aged clergyman is a fine specimen of culture and Christian charity. The scenes of boarding-school life here depicted are full of vivacity and reality.



## THE BALL OF FORTUNE;

Or Ned Somerset's Inheritance. By CHARLES PEARCE, author of "Frank the Fisher-boy," "The Golden Island," &c. &c. With 4 full-page Illustrations printed in black and tint. Crown 8vo, cloth elegant, price 2s. 6d.

"The Ball of Fortune, or Ned Somerset's Inheritance." A story of plot and character dealing with some out of the many scenes of London life, and founded on the strange bequest left by a sea captain, and the endeavours of some unscrupulous persons to obtain possession of it before the discovery of the true heir in the person of a neglected street Arab. The story is lively and attractive, and the incidents move so quickly that the attention of the reader is sustained throughout.

## THE FAMILY FAILING.

By DARLEY DALE, author of "Little Bricks," "The Black Donkey," "A Tearful Victory," &c. &c. Cloth elegant, 2s. 6d.

This is a lively and amusing account of a family, the members of which while they lived in affluence were remarkable for their discontent, but who, after the supposed loss of fortune has compelled them to seek a more humble home in Jersey, become less selfish, and develop very excellent traits of character under the pressure of comparative adversity. Their escapades and narrow escapes from serious dangers form an exciting part of the narrative, which contains many pleasant episodes of life in the Channel Islands.

## EPISODES OF FOREIGN LIFE AND MANNERS,

And Pictures of Foreign Lands. A Book for Youth. With engraved Title and Frontispiece. Cloth elegant, 2s. 6d.

The object in this work is to whet the appetite rather than to satiate the mind of the readers—to create within them a desire to know more of the strange countries and peoples here mentioned.

## EPISODES OF THE SEA IN FORMER DAYS:

Records of Suffering and Saving. A Book for Boys. With engraved Title and Frontispiece. Cloth elegant, 2s. 6d.

Stories of shipwreck, famine, mutiny, and the other misfortunes which befall the mariner, will always be appreciated by those who love to read of deeds of daring, and to ponder on the lessons which may be drawn from them. This volume comprises narratives of occurrences which have become historical, such as the ever-memorable mutiny of the *Bounty*, and many others of equal interest.

## EPISODES OF CAPTIVITY AND EXILE

In various Parts of Europe. A Book for Boys. With engraved Title and Frontispiece. Cloth elegant, 2s. 6d.

Captivity and Escape is at all times an attractive subject for youthful minds, presenting as it does to them scenes of adventurous daring, hardship, and suffering, calculated to excite their natural ardour and draw forth their ready sympathies. The tales embodied in this volume will be found to comprise those of the most fascinating description.

## EPISODES OF HISTORY:

Stirring Incidents in the Lives of Men and Nations. A Book for Youth. With engraved Title and Frontispiece. Cloth elegant, 2s. 6d.

In the compilation of this volume the object has been to give a series of sketches stretching over a long term of time, rather than a finished picture of any definite period. These have been collected during an extensive course of reading, and the only attempt made at classification has been to place the articles in chronological order.

## EPISODES OF DISCOVERY IN ALL AGES.

A Book for Youth. With engraved Title and Frontispiece. Cloth extra, 2s. 6d.

In this work will be found accounts of a few of the most famous discoverers and explorers of former days. The materials from which this volume has been compiled were gathered from scarce records and other trustworthy sources; and the whole forms a series of incidents of unexampled interest in the world's history.



## EPISODES OF PERSONAL ADVENTURE

In Field, Flood, and Forest. A Book for Boys. With engraved Title and Frontispiece. Cloth elegant, 2s. 6d.

The incidents in this volume are wholly founded on the real experiences of those who figure in them. They have been carefully selected from numerous sources.

## THE NEWSPAPER READER.

Selections from leading Journals of the Nineteenth Century on Events of the Day. By HENRY FINDLATER BUSSEY and T. WILSON REID. With engraved Frontispiece. Foolsap 8vo, cloth elegant, 2s. 6d.

"The idea of the book is admirable, and its execution is excellent. It is extremely interesting. It may be read not merely by young people, but by old ones, and they will find profit to themselves in its perusal. The work is well done."—*Scotsman*.

## THE BRITISH BIOGRAPHICAL READER:

Brief Biographies of prominent British Heroes, Statesmen, Dramatists, Poets, Scientific Men, &c. With Introductory Notes by the Editor. Illustrated by numerous Authentic Portraits. Foolsap 8vo, cloth elegant, 2s. 6d.

"A number of excellent portraits add considerably to the attractiveness of the work, which may safely be pronounced one of the most interesting of the Series."—*Aberdeen Journal*.

## LONDON, PAST AND PRESENT.

Being Notices Historical and Descriptive of Ancient and Modern London, and of the Counties on which it stands. With numerous authentic Illustrations. Foolsap 8vo, cloth extra, 2s. 6d.

"A compilation from which a variety of interesting information may be gathered with regard to the past history and present condition of the metropolis."—*Athenæum*.



## FOUR LITTLE MISCHIEFS.

By ROSA MULHOLLAND, author of "Five Little Farmers," "The Little Flower Seekers," "Pink and Blossom," &c. With 3 full-page Illustrations in colours. Crown 8vo, cloth, with neat design on cover, price 2s.

What is called Mischief may often be regarded as the experimental adventures of children, and this story of child-life is, from this point of view, one of the most amusing of the author's excellent little books. Its fun is innocent, its incident both captivating and instructive.

## OUR DOLLY:

Her Words and Ways. By MRS. R. H. READ. Illustrated by many Woodcuts in the text, and a Frontispiece printed in colour. Crown 8vo, cloth elegant, price 2s.

A story for children, showing the growth and development of character in a little girl, and pleasantly describing the surroundings of the family and a series of entertaining small adventures suitable for very juvenile readers.

## FAIRY FANCY:

Her Notes and Notions. By MRS. R. H. READ, author of "Our Dolly," "Silvermere," &c., &c. With many Woodcut Illustrations in the text, and a Frontispiece printed in colours. Crown 8vo, cloth elegant, price 2s.

"Fairy Fancy" is a story for juvenile readers, recounting the experiences of a fairy who dwells amidst the children of a family, and observes not only their conduct but the singular behaviour of "Toph," the raven, and other creatures associated with them. The tale is designed to show the influence of character even among little children, and the narrative is such as to awaken and sustain the interest of the younger readers.



## ADVENTURES OF MRS. WISHING-TO-BE.

By ALICE CORKRAN, authoress of "Latheby Towers," "Bessie Lang," &c. Illustrated by 3 full-page Pictures printed in colours. Crown 8vo, cloth elegant, price 2s.

"Mrs. Wishing-to-Be." The strange adventures of a very young lady, showing how she met with the wonderful people of nursery legend and the manner of her introduction to them. A tale for the Little Ones; founded on a fanciful reference to well-known characters of juvenile song and story.

## NAUGHTY MISS BUNNY:

Her Tricks and Troubles. A Story for Little Children. By CLARA MULHOLLAND. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, price 2s.

This is a book which will amuse quite little folks, as a story of the wayward tricks of a spoiled child, and the scrapes into which they lead her. The story consists of small incidents such as please small listeners, who will be interested not only in Miss Bunny's naughtiness but in her reformation.

## NEW LIGHT THROUGH OLD WINDOWS.

A Series of Stories illustrating Fables of Æsop. By GREGSON Gow, author of "Tales for the Twilight," "Troubles and Triumphs of Little Tim," &c. Illustrated by 3 full-page Pictures in colours. Crown 8vo, cloth elegant, 2s.

A series of stories designed to bring before the young mind, in a new and entertaining form, some of the shreds of wit and wisdom which have come down to us from ancient times in the guise of fables. The fables here chosen for texts are old friends, familiar to us from our earliest years; and the tales, although amusement has been a chief end aimed at, will be found most of them to suggest some important truth, or teach some sound lesson in practical morality.



## THE TROUBLES AND TRIUMPHS OF LITTLE TIM.

A City Story. By GREGSON GOW, author of "Tales for the Twilight." With two Illustrations in colour. Foolscap 8vo, 192 pp., cloth extra, 1s. 6d.

## THE HAPPY LAD.

A Story of Peasant Life in Norway. From the Norwegian of Bjørnstjerne Björnson. With Frontispiece in colour. Foolscap 8vo, 192 pp., cloth extra, 1s. 6d.

## INTO THE HAVEN.

By ANNIE S. SWAN, author of "Shadow Lives," "Thankful Rest," &c. With two Illustrations printed in colour. Foolscap 8vo, 192 pp., cloth extra, 1s. 6d.

## BOX OF STORIES.

Packed by HORACE HAPPYMAN. A Series of interesting Tales for the Young. With 2 Illustrations printed in colours. Foolscap 8vo, 192 pp., cloth extra, 1s. 6d.

## PATRIOT MARTYR.

Being the Life and Times of Jeanne D'Arc, commonly called the Maid of Orleans. Illustrated by 2 Pictures printed in colours. Foolscap 8vo, cloth extra, 1s. 6d.



### THE NEW BOY AT MERRITON.

By JULIA GODDARD. With Frontispiece in colour. Fcap. 8vo, 128 pp., cloth extra, price 1s.

"A story of English school life. It is an attempt to teach a somewhat higher code of honour than that which prevails among the general run of schoolboys, and the lesson makes a very good story."—*School Board Chronicle*.

### THE BLIND BOY OF DRESDEN.

With Frontispiece in colour. Fcap. 8vo, 128 pp., cloth extra, price 1s.

"This is a family story of great pathos. It does not obtrusively dictate its lesson, but it quietly introduces, and leaves it within the heart."—*Aberdeen Journal*.

### JON OF ICELAND:

A True Story. With Frontispiece in colour. Fcap. 8vo, 128 pp., cloth extra, price 1s.

"'Jon of Iceland' is a sturdy, well educated young Iceland, who becomes a successful teacher. It gives children a clear idea of the chief physical features of the island, and of the simple and manly character of its inhabitants."—*School Guardian*.

### STORIES FROM SHAKESPEARE.

By MACFARLAND and ABBY SAGE. With Frontispiece in colour. Fcap. 8vo, 128 pp., cloth extra, price 1s.

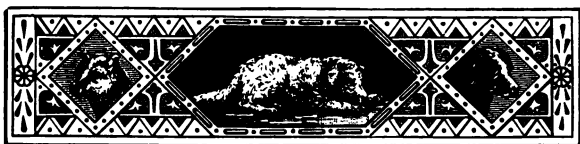
"The stories are told in such a way that young people having read them will desire to study the works of Shakespeare in their original form."—*The Schoolmistress*.

### EVERY MAN IN HIS PLACE:

The Story of a City Boy and a Forest Boy. With Frontispiece in colour. Fcap. 8vo, 128 pp., cloth extra, price 1s.

"This is the history of the son of a wealthy Hamburg merchant, who wished to follow in the steps of Robinson Crusoe. He visited Heligoland and the Hartz Mountains, and was put to the test, and became convinced in the end that it is better to live the life of a wealthy merchant in a great city than to endure hardship by choice."—*School Board Chronicle*.





### FIRESIDE FAIRIES AND FLOWER FANCIES:

STORIES FOR GIRLS. With Frontispiece in colour. Fcap. 8vo, 128 pp., cloth extra, price 1s.

"Nine stories are included, all for girls, encouraging them to try and do their duty. Young servants would find this book very interesting."—*The Schoolmistress*.

### TO THE SEA IN SHIPS:

STORIES OF SUFFERING AND SAVING AT SEA. With Frontispiece in colour. Fcap. 8vo, 128 pp., cloth extra, price 1s.

"*To the Sea in Ships* records several noted disasters at sea, such as the foundering of the *London* and the wreck of the *Atlantic*. It also contains narratives of successful rescues. This is a capital book for boys."—*School Guardian*.

### JACK'S VICTORY:

AND OTHER STORIES ABOUT DOGS. With Frontispiece in colour. Fcap. 8vo, 128 pp., cloth extra, price 1s.

"Every boy, and some girls, take great delight in reading about dogs. Well, Jack was a dog; a famous and wonderful one, too. He became leader of a team in Greenland, and some rare exploits he took part in. He would not sleep in a house; he would not hide from an enemy; he would not harm the defenceless. Besides 'Jack's Victory' there are ten other stories about dogs in this volume. These narratives are not old ones, but are fresh and pleasing."—*The Schoolmistress*.

### THE STORY OF A KING,

TOLD BY ONE OF HIS SOLDIERS. With Frontispiece in colour. Fcap. 8vo, 128 pp., cloth extra, price 1s.

"This book recounts the boyhood and reign of Charles XII. of Sweden. The wars in which he was engaged and the extraordinary victories he won are well described, and equally so are the misfortunes which latterly came on him and his kingdom through his uncontrollable wilfulness."—*Aberdeen Journal*.



## LITTLE DANIEL :

A Story of a Flood on the Rhine. With Frontispiece in colour.

Fcap. 8vo, 128 pp., cloth extra, price 1s.

"A simple and touching story of a flood on the Rhine, told as well as George Eliot so graphically wrote of *The Mill on the Floss*."—*Governess*.

## PRINCE ALEXIS :

A Tale of Old Russia. With Frontispiece in colour. Fcap. 8vo,

128 pp., cloth extra, price 1s.

This is a legend wrought into a story, rendering a fiction of Life in Russia, something more than a hundred years ago; a state of things which, as the author says, "is now impossible, and will soon become incredible." It is like a romance of Old Bagdad, in which the colouring and the characters and manners are Russian instead of Arabian.

## SASHA THE SERF,

And other Stories of Russian Life. With Frontispiece in colour.

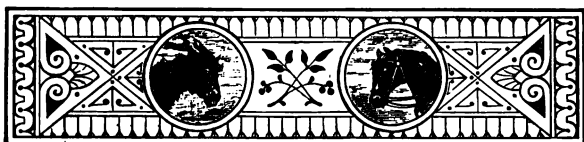
Fcap. 8vo, 128 pp., cloth extra, price 1s.

The stories in the volume comprise:—The Life of Sasha, a poor boy who, by his love of knowledge and his industry, saved the life of his lord, and finally rose to wealth and gained his freedom,—Incidents of remarkable personal bravery in the Russian army,—An interesting story of humble life in Russia,—A story of Russian mining life,—A bear-hunt in Russia, &c. &c.

## TRUE STORIES OF FOREIGN HISTORY.

A Series of Interesting Tales. With Frontispiece printed in colours. Fcap. 8vo, 128 pp., cloth extra, price 1s.

The book contains stories—Of some of the early printers,—How Quentin Matsys the Antwerp smith became a great painter,—The rise and fall of Jean Ango the fisherman of Dieppe,—The early trials of Fritz Körner the tailor's son, who could not learn his father's trade but who became commander-in-chief of the Brunswick forces,—Of Polish patriotism,—The heroism of Casabianca the little French midshipman, &c. &c.



### THE LITTLE BROWN BIRD:

A Story of Industry. With Frontispiece in colours. Medium, 8vo, cloth elegant, price 6*d*.

This book contains two tales, the first intended to inculcate habits of industry, and the other to show that mediocrity with perseverance achieves a more honourable career than "talent" wasted or misapplied.

### THE MAID OF DOMREMY:

And other Tales. With Frontispiece in colours. Medium 8vo, cloth elegant, price 6*d*.

"The Maid of Domremy" is in fact Joan of Arc, whose story is well rendered into something less than twenty pages. Other sections of the little volume treat of the "Feast of Cherries;" "Something about Royal Children;" "The Black Douglas;" "What a Boy Did," and "Johanna Sebus." These are all narratives of fact.

### LITTLE ERIC:

A Story of Honesty. With Frontispiece in colours. Medium 8vo, cloth elegant, price 6*d*.

This is a pure juvenile fiction, illustrative of truthfulness and honesty. It is full of interest from beginning to end, and well suited as a reward book for Sunday Schools.

### UNCLE BEN THE WHALER:

And other Stories. With Frontispiece in colours. Medium 8vo, cloth elegant, price 6*d*.

"Uncle Ben the Whaler" is an "old salt" who tells a group of children a very interesting tale of his career as a seaman in the Arctic waters. The other stories in the volume are :—Three Handfuls of Grain,—The Golden Rule,—The Broken Jar.



### THE PALACE OF LUXURY:

And other Stories. With Frontispiece in colours. Medium 8vo cloth elegant, price 6*d*.

A youth named Seekpeace is shown under the guidance of the fairy Pureheart all the deceptions in the Palace of Luxury,—Madam Sunshine's parable about the Swan of Fortune,—The Colorado beetle's talk with the weathercock,—and other short amusing stories.

### THE CHARCOAL BURNER:

Or Kindness Repaid. With Frontispiece in colours. Medium 8vo, cloth elegant, price 6*d*.

This is a most interesting story of a poor charcoal-burner in a German forest, who discovers and relieves a wounded officer, and is himself afterwards strangely delivered from death by the same officer. The tale inculcates the duty of always showing kindness and of forgiving an injury.

### WILLIE BLACK:

A Story of Doing Right. With Frontispiece in colours. Medium 8vo, cloth elegant, price 6*d*.

It is a tale of a little Shoe-black to whom a gentleman gave half-a-crown by mistake for a penny, and it shows all the good that came to this little boy through seeking to restore the silver coin to its owner. Proving how it is always best to do right.

### THE HORSE AND HIS WAYS:

Stories of Man and his Best Friend. With Frontispiece in colours. Medium 8vo, cloth elegant, price 6*d*.

A series of interesting anecdotes about the courage of the horse; its friendship, its docility, its sagacity, and its power of memory.



### THE SHOEMAKER'S PRESENT:

A Legendary Story. With Frontispiece in colours. Medium 8vo, cloth elegant, price 6*d*.

A legendary story of "How a boy became obedient." The tale is told in a semi-magical tone, and is very interesting.

### LIGHTS TO WALK BY:

Stories for the Young. With Frontispiece in colours. Medium 8vo, cloth elegant, price 6*d*.

The book contains: Willy Montague's Lesson—The Visit of the Prince—The Conscript of Lyons—My Friend Jacques—Honesty and Usefulness—God's Promise. They are all lively little narratives, each with a wholesome moral. They are well written and very attractive.

### THE LITTLE MERCHANT:

And other Stories. With Frontispiece in colours. Medium 8vo, cloth elegant, price 6*d*.

This book contains a series of little stories of English life and of the experience of young people in this land. They are all designed to enforce some important moral lesson, such as honesty, industry, kindness, &c. &c.

### NICHOLINA:

A Story about an Iceberg. With Frontispiece in colours. Medium 8vo, cloth elegant, price 6*d*.

This is a tale of the Arctic regions, full of peculiar interest and vividly suggestive of the feeling which is conveyed to the mind of the traveller who wanders over these latitudes. The other stories in the volume are:—Frozen in; a Story of the Arctic Circle,—Idana and Her Apples; a Story of Iceland.

*Blackie & Son's Books for the Young.*

---

**Price 2s.**

FOUR LITTLE MISCHIEFS. By ROSA MULHOLLAND.  
OUR DOLLY. By Mrs. R. H. READ.  
FAIRY FANCY. By Mrs. R. H. READ.  
ADVENTURES OF MRS. WISHING-TO-BE. By ALICE CORKRAN.  
NEW LIGHT THROUGH OLD WINDOWS. By GREGSON GOW.  
NAUGHTY MISS BUNNY. By CLARA MULHOLLAND.

**Books at 1s. 6d.**

TROUBLES AND TRIUMPHS OF LITTLE TIM. By GREGSON GOW.  
THE HAPPY LAD. By BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSSON.  
INTO THE HAVEN. By ANNIE S. SWAN.  
BOX OF STORIES. Packed by HORACE HAPPMAN.  
PATRIOT MARTYR: the Life and Times of Jeanne d'Arc.

**Books at 1s.**

THE NEW BOY AT MERRITON. By JULIA GODDARD.  
THE BLIND BOY OF DRESDEN AND HIS SISTER.  
JON OF ICELAND: a True Story.  
STORIES FROM SHAKESPEARE. By A. J. MACFARLAND and ABBY SAGE.  
EVERY MAN IN HIS PLACE: the Story of a City Boy and a Forest Boy.  
FIRESIDE FAIRIES AND FLOWER FANCIES: Stories for Girls.  
TO THE SEA IN SHIPS: Stories of Suffering and Saving at Sea.  
JACK'S VICTORY: and other Stories about Dogs.  
THE STORY OF A KING: told by one of his Soldiers.  
PRINCE ALEXIS, or "BEAUTY AND THE BEAST."  
LITTLE DANIEL: a Story of a Flood on the Rhine.  
SASHA THE SERF: and other Stories of Russian Life.  
TRUE STORIES OF FOREIGN HISTORY.

**Books at 6d.**

THE LITTLE BROWN BIRD: a Story of Industry.  
THE MAID OF DOMREMY: and other Tales.  
LITTLE ERIC: a Story of Honesty.  
UNCLE BEN THE WHALER: and other Stories.  
THE PALACE OF LUXURY: and other Stories.  
THE CHARCOAL-BURNER: or, Kindness Repaid.  
WILLIE BLACK: a Story of Doing Right.  
THE HORSE AND HIS WAYS: Stories of Man and His Best Friend.  
THE SHOEMAKER'S PRESENT: a Legendary Story.  
LIGHTS TO WALK BY: Stories for the Young.  
THE LITTLE MERCHANT: and other Stories.  
NICHOLINA: A Story about an Iceberg.

**BLACKIE & SON:**

LONDON,	...	...	...	49 & 50 OLD BAILEY.
GLASGOW,	...	..	...	17 STANHOPE STREET.
EDINBURGH,	...	...	...	102 SOUTH BRIDGE.
DUBLIN,	...	...	...	89 TALBOT STREET.









